the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 11, 1996

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THE RIGHT'S ANTI-AMERICAN TEMPTATION
DAVID BROOKS

REAGAN WAS RIGHT

We Gave Up the Panama Canal—And Boy, Are We Going to Regret It

A Report by *Thomas M. DeFrank*

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Dole and the *Times*

Bob Dole has angrily denounced the *New York Times* for pro-Clinton bias. By all accounts, Dole's audiences have loved this media-bashing. But the working press has laughingly dismissed Dole's pique as groundless. They have *too* covered Clinton's "scandals" and "failures," reporters say; Dole's list of "overlooked" or "whitewashed" issues is drawn, after all, from stories appearing in, among other papers, the *New York Times*.

That's not really the gravamen of Dole's complaint, though. The bias Republican and conservative candidates moan about isn't so much a matter of *what* the newspapers report as *how* they report it. The devil is in the details, in the little stage whispers a "serious" journalist tucks into his otherwise "straight" dispatches from the field.

For instance: On October 28 in San Diego, Dole delivered a reasonably serious speech about affirmative action and the anti-quota California Civil Rights Initiative. Adam Nagourney of the *New York Times* reported as much, calling it a "sober and tightly argued presentation."

But then came the following passage in Dole's address. "Every time I drive to work in Washington, D.C., or drive down North Capitol Street, and I see dozens and dozens of black men, without work, I say to myself: 'What has [affirmative action] done for them?' Absolutely nothing."

This argument, the *Times* and Nagourney decided, required some clarifying "context." North Capitol Street, you see, "runs north from the Capitol through some of Washington's more impoverished neighborhoods." But "Mr. Dole lives at the Watergate, in one of the city's more elegant neighborhoods, and there is, generally speaking, little visible evidence of poverty between that part of the city and where he used to work."

The implication of this rather bitchy aside: Dole is a hypocrite who cares not a whit for the poor and is using affirmative action purely as a "socially divisive" wedge issue.

Actually, Bob Dole's campaign headquarters in Washington is located just off North Capitol Street. We suspect he sees those unemployed black men fairly often. And a larger question remains: Why is Dole singled out for snotty commentary like this?

On the day that Dole spoke in California, anti-CCRI organizers released their first campaign commercials. The television ad, produced by Democrat Bob Shrum, begins with images of David Duke and a burning cross. "Newt Gingrich, Pat Buchanan, and David Duke want you to vote yes" on CCRI, its voice-over intones.

Four radio ads unveiled by the anti-CCRI crowd descend even lower into the muck. Ellen DeGeneres reads one of them and says, apropos of nothing, that Buchanan, Gingrich, and Duke are "all anti-abortion." And those three men are also "all supporting" CCRI. In another spot, Bruce Springsteen claims (falsely) that CCRI would "legalize discrimination against women and girls in jobs, in education, and in sports."

Did news of this amazing, repulsive, thoroughly dishonest media campaign find its way into Adam Nagourney's story on Bob Dole and the politics of affirmative action in California? No, it did not. Has the *Times* mentioned it? No, it has not.

Yes, Virginia, there is such a thing as media bias.

Mark, not Huffington

Big spending on the campaign trail causes tidal waves of criticism for wealthy Republican office-seekers. Not so for their Democratic counterparts. When Michael Huffington spent over $29 million in California for his 1994 Senate campaign, the media charged him with trying to buy the election. This cash flow does seem immense, but given California's then 14.7 million voters, Huffington spent $2.03 per voter.

Compare that with the megabucks spent this year by Mark Warner, the Virginia Democratic candidate for Senate. Warner shelled out $8.3 million for 3.3 million voters. That's $2.50 per voter, but we haven't heard a peep about Warner's attempt to "buy the election."

Yes, Virginia, and yet again, there is such a thing as media bias.

Perhaps Our Last Jack 'n' Jude Item!

For weeks now, the Scrapbook has been chronicling the strange, symbiotic relationship between Jack Kemp and supply-side publicist Jude Wanniski. Now comes a piece of primary evidence on the meaning of Jack 'n'

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Jude. It's located on Wanniski's Web site, which he uses for the worldwide distribution of his correspondence.

Jonathan Chait of the *New Republic* recently interviewed Wanniski about the Jack 'n' Jude dynamic. Wanniski was displeased with the article that resulted. "Your column," he writes to Chait, "only informs readers that we are so close as to be indistinguishable, and that therefore Jack is my puppet, a man who believes tax cuts can solve all the world's problems."

Wanniski complains that this is an unfair construction of the two men's paired careers and ideas. He then proceeds to prove it isn't unfair at all. Do tax cuts solve all the world's problems? They do: "If we could get tax rates and money just right, Jonathan, then the social pathologies that we blame on the greed of the rich or the poor would dissolve, as they have throughout history."

Is Kemp Wanniski's puppet? You be the judge. Kemp and he, Wanniski explains, "have been partners for 20 years." Partners the way "a husband is a partner with his wife." Or like "the Lone Ranger and Tonto." And who's to say "who is the puppet and who the puppeteer in a partnership?"

It looks like Kemp's the puppet, actually. "In our partnership, Jack's and mine," Wanniski explains, "we discovered early on that I had a tremendous comparative advantage over him in cooking up political ideas." What was Kemp good for? He was the public mouthpiece. "People actually like him," Wanniski points out, with ghastly candor, but "they have serious doubts about me."

You bet.

Lind Loves the Right

A few months ago, Michael Lind delivered a primal scream of a book about how the Republican party is intellectually inert and conservatism is a secretive conspiracy. After letting his rage out in the pages of *Out of Conservatism*, Lind is feeling much better. In last week's *New Yorker*, he argues that "intellectual vigor" is "fast becoming Republican property." In the long run, "the Republican party's donnybrooks will have helped to identify it as the party that tackles difficult issues." Never has an author renounced a book so quickly. Hey, here's a terrifying thought: Maybe Lind is turning conservative again.

Colorblindness?

The *Washington Post* has editorialized against colorblind public policies, but it has embraced colorblindness in an area where color presumably does matter—in describing the *appearance* of individuals. And in an instance where appearance matters—in alerting readers to keep an eye out for suspected criminals.

Thus, we read in October 26's *Post* of an abduction from a garage at Tysons II Galleria mall near Washington: "Police describe the suspect as muscular, about 6 feet 1 inch tall and about 190 pounds, with short dark hair and dark eyes." In fact, the police described the suspect as muscular *and dark-skinned*, about 6 feet 1 inch tall, etc., etc. So, at least, the warning posters at the mall said the next day. But the police description was too politically incorrect to be reproduced by the *Post*, which is evidently more afraid of getting angry calls from black "community leaders" than it is interested in helping apprehend a rapist.

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Casual

At the Red Lobster with Tammy Faye

"Oh! Can we go to Red Lobster? Can we? It's my favorite!" she implores, batting those pig-bristle eyelashes that make me want to buff my shoes and/or get my car washed. "She" in this case is the former Tammy Faye Bakker (now married to one Roe Messner), and I have followed her to a book signing for her autobiography, *Telling It My Way*, in her natural habitat of pool-supply stores and outlet malls. "Surely, darlin'," I say, "I will fulfill your culinary fantasies," wanting her to feel comfortable in this white-trash Virginia milieu so I can execute my elegantly simple plan: to impale her over lunch.

Though I loathe "civic journalism," I am not opposed to occasionally slipping into the less sententious role of God's Avenger. Sure, He's already chastised Tammy Faye plenty: her ex-husband's imprisonment, her Lucille Ball voice, and the brief stint on a daily talk show co-starring the insufferable Jm (yes, Jm) J. Bullock. But I have come to finish the job, because not since Emperor Nero has anyone dissuaded so many people from Christianity—people whose only religious dalliance might have come through the murky prism of fallible televangelists.

"Typical Baptist," huffs her defensive husband Roe Messner (a former PTL Club contractor who stole her from an incarcerated Jim), as I ask prickly questions over Red Lobster's patented cheese bread. He's referring to the historic rivalry between the Baptists (me) and Assemblies of God (them)—King-James-punching Tub-Thumpers and Glossolalial Pew-Jumpers respectively. But Tammy remains unflustered, suckling her beer-battered shrimp. "Oooh, this is awesome! Now what were you saying, hon?"

I was saying, Doesn't she feel any remorse for cheapening the faith with over-the-top extravagances: getting gullible biddies to raid their savings to fund grand hotels and waterslides for the-Holy-Ghost-comes-to-Branson-style variety shows, while she and Jim were collecting million-dollar salaries and air-conditioned doghouses (she claims it was only heated) and paying hush money to paramours and taking 25-city "Farewell For Now" tours complete with full orchestra and inspirational dancing waters?

"All we wanted was to minister," she says in between slurps of white-cheddar mashed potatoes, "and give Christians a place where they could come and feel they had something as good as Las Vegas." But what about the his-and-hers Rolls Royces?

She removes a lemon-pepper-shrimp shell from her teeth. "Mine was a Mercedes," she corrects me, "and I drove one simply for protection. It was a heavy car."

"Did you ever maybe consider . . . a Buick?" I rejoin. But I'm losing my edge, partly out of pity (when I questioned whether their ministry was completely altruistic, she asked, "What does that word mean?") and partly because she's still such a peach in those T.J. Maxx zebra prints and see-through plastic chukkas with that pancake-batter foundation and ice-cream-dipper rouge. "The make-up only takes five minutes to put on," she says, and I'm inclined to believe her, since it doesn't appear to be applied with much precision.

Of the stacks of books she signed at the empty Super Crown, she says, "Nobody will buy them. People are sick of me." And now I start feeling guilty for judging somebody so gloriously obtuse. After 10 years on the losing side of punchlines and resigned to her fate as an iconic cliché, all she can do now is construct counterfeit realities (she blames "Jerry Foulwell" for most of the PTL sordidness) and anesthetize herself with discount pleasures: like hawking her new wig line, or Fashion Bug shopping sprees, or eating at Red Lobster on a surly reporter's expense account. Perhaps if redemption is unattainable, one must take solace in the $7.99 Mix & Match Shrimp Combo.

She can feel me going maudlin on her when she tries to pick me up. "You're a smartass, Matt—I like you," she says. "But I *love* all things chocolate." So it was one Fudge Overboard and two spoons as Tammy let me tug on her wig while she catalogued where she purchased all her fake jewelry. She tells me she never talks to Jim anymore. "I feel sad that he's been treated so wrong. He's a very lonely man, and I feel sorry for him."

She's seceded from the Bakker legacy on paper, if not in the public's consciousness. But deep down she knows that they share an insoluble bond through their love of the ministry, their love of duplicity, and now, through the seafood-lover within.

As Jim writes of his first post-slammer meal in his new hardcover mea culpa, *I Was Wrong*: They "took me to a Red Lobster restaurant. . . . I knew I was in trouble. The menu was so big! . . . There were just too many choices. Tears welled up in my eyes. . . . I ordered a seafood platter with a little bit of everything on it. Wow!"

Matt Labash

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Orthodox Catholics: DON'T DESPAIR!

Anne Roche Muggeridge, daughter-in-law of convert Malcolm Muggeridge, has said in her recent book, *The Desolate City: Revolution in the Catholic Church* (Harper & Row): "Because the integrity of its message has been betrayed, the Catholic Church is in ruins. Yet even now there are converts, of exceptionally high quality, and their number is increasing with the tenure of the present Pope. Catholics watched with a mixture of pity and amusement as the excellent Anglo-Catholic *New Oxford Review* argued and agonized itself into the [Roman] Catholic Church. I know a substantial number of recent converts like this and am much edified by their purity and ardour. Seven of them are my godchildren, and I must confess that some of us, to our shame, earnestly tried to delay them, on the grounds of the growing disorder in the Catholic Church. They forced their way past us anyway, thank God. They come because at the highest level of Catholic teaching, the doctrine of the faith, though much embattled, remains uncompromised and is as fearlessly proclaimed by John Paul II as by Peter, Paul, Ignatius, or Augustine. These new Catholics and the extraordinary Pope to whom they belong are a very present comfort when one is tempted to despair."

Over the last quarter century, the number of converts to Roman Catholicism slowed to a trickle. But now, a new wave of converts is entering the Church. What's more, contrary to the shibboleth that Catholicism is a superstitious religion for the ignorant, an unusually high proportion of the new Catholics consists of writers and intellectuals. Among them, it may be hoped, is another Chesterton, another Maritain, another Newman, another Ronald Knox, another Dorothy Day, another Gerard Manley Hopkins, another Edith Stein – converts all.

The new converts are not attracted to the diluted Catholicism of the Hans Kungs, the Charles Currans, or those who sign ads favoring legal abortion. No, they are attracted by the Catholicism of the ages, the Magisterium, and the inspiring leadership of the current Pope.

The forum for the new generation of converts is the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a monthly magazine that takes its name from the 19th-century Oxford Movement in England. Today there is a new Oxford Movement afoot in America. Among the converts to Roman Catholicism who have written for the REVIEW are Sheldon Vanauken, John C. Cort, Walker Percy, L. Brent Bozell, Avery Dulles, and Peter Kreeft. But the REVIEW isn't just for converts. Most of our writers are cradle Catholics and a significant minority belongs to various other churches. Amazingly, while the REVIEW is a lightning rod for "papist" pilgrims, it is also ecumenical in spirit. And we cover the full range of issues of concern to today's reflective and believing Christians, including the quest for a more just and compassionate society.

If you want to recapture the excitement of when you first really believed, if you feel inundated by "bad news" about the Church, if you despair of all the moral laxity and doubt and dissension within her portals but seek a remedy for that despair, or if you're searching for a "face" of Catholicism that is spiritually vibrant, solidly prolife, doctrinally sound, and socially engaged, it's time for you to subscribe to the NEW OXFORD REVIEW!

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Why They Hate CCRI

Heather Mac Donald, in her splendid take-no-prisoners article "Why They Hate CCRI" (Oct. 28), got it right: A lot of diversity-industry parasites will have their rice bowls broken by Prop. 209. People will fight back with methods fair and foul when their livelihoods, however insalubrious, are endangered. Quota shills are no different, except perhaps in their semantic games ("Goals and timetables aren't quotas"), evasions, hypocrisy, sanctimony, disingenuousness, and shameless intellectual dishonesty.

Less clear is the motivation of the big Left Coast corporations—PacBell, Southern Cal Edison, PG&E, Hewlett-Packard, Bank of America, and ARCO were named—to oppose measures to end racial and gender preferences. It is established that quotas take a toll on productivity; one study showed that they cost as much as 4 percent of U.S. GDP.

I suspect that the CEOs have come to look on this hit to their companies' productivity as just another tax imposed by Washington. But they talk themselves into feeling righteous about this tax. And as long as their competitors are paying the same tax, hey, why worry?

WARREN WETMORE
HAZEL CREST, IL

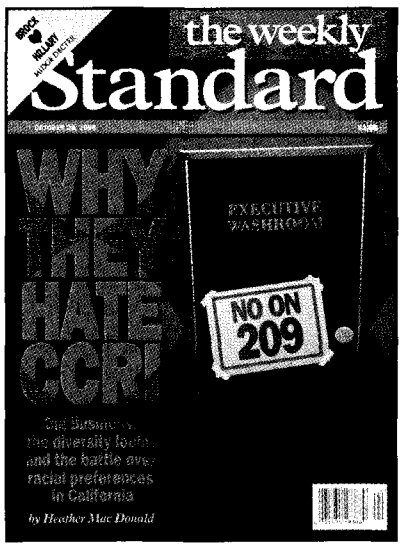
Regarding Heather Mac Donald's article: The unholy alliance of big government, corporate America, and New Age philosophy is reminiscent of Nazism. The "thought police" are alive and well in California, with "diversity managers" teaching us who we are and what to think. This mindset smacks of the dogma that inebriated the German people decades ago. Inevitably, it leads to moral, civic, and national collapse.

BRUCE C.A. DESAUTELS
WESTFIELD, MA

Polling Minnesota

Fred Barnes was incorrect in "Feeling Minnesota" (Oct. 28) when he wrote that the *Star Tribune*'s September Minnesota Poll didn't ask about minor-party candidates in its trial-heat question about the U.S. Senate race. In fact, the September poll's trial-heat question included all eight candidates—major and minor party—who had filed with the Minnesota secretary of state.

He also incorrectly asserted that the *Star Tribune* "played up a new question to make Wellstone look strong." The newspaper reported the combined results of the two questions on the front page and assigned the results of the two individual questions to the small-type methodology sidebar that always accompanies our poll stories. There, we outlined factually and frankly the experiment and its results.



ROBERT P. DAVES
DIRECTOR OF POLLING AND NEWS RESEARCH
MINNEAPOLIS, MN

FRED BARNES RESPONDS: ***I stand corrected. I overlooked the small note accompanying the September poll that said the names of minor candidates were read to poll respondents. My apologies for the error.***

Jack 'n' Jude: Who Cares?

Why waste so much time and space identifying Jack Kemp's ideas with those stemming from Jude Wanniski (Scrapbook, Oct. 28)?

Are such ideas not the best of Jack Kemp? Was not Wanniski's *The Way the World Works* on the right track? Better that Kemp should stick with Wanniski and teach Bob Dole about it. All of us have ideas derived from someone; why not explore the ideas?

Surely those from Wanniski's book are superior to HUD liberalism and Bob Dole's corporate tax "reforms."

ROBERT C. LEA, JR.
QUEEN ANNE, MD

Clinton's Fat Promises

Congratulations to Christopher Caldwell for his interesting and vitally significant article "Clinton's Fat Lippo" (Oct. 28). In Clinton's 1992 campaign, he said: "Al Gore and I will get rid of all those wealthy foreign lobbyists that run Washington."

Even as he spoke, Ron Brown, the national chairman of the Democratic party, was one of the foremost wealthy lobbyists in Washington. Mickey Kantor was probably number two. How did Clinton and Gore "get rid" of Brown and Kantor? Why didn't anyone in the "watchdog media" ever speak up about that? Why did the U. S. Senate confirm Ron Brown as secretary of commerce, knowing that he professionally represented foreign interests? No one likes to speak ill of the dead, but Brown was very much alive when he sold out America, and Mickey Kantor lives on.

The Lippo scandal represents what is wrong with this country, particularly this administration: total government corruption.

MARY D. MAY
BENTON, AR

Back to 1973

Michael Barone's article on the reelection of Richard M. Nixon ("It's 1973 All Over Again," Oct. 28) overlooked the major reason why the American electorate voted to return the president.

The election of 1972 was a referendum to support or reject the salvation of a free nation from communism, as

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we had done successfully in Korea twenty years earlier. All other issues were of significantly less importance. Fifty thousand young American men and women lost their lives, and the trauma of voting to say "Sorry, just a mistake" was more than the voters were prepared to accept. The preservation of national honor in war outweighed the acceptance of presidential perfidy.

PHILLIP A. ARONOFF
HOUSTON, TX

Michael Barone errs when he refers to the "FBI burglary of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office."

Actually, the "black-bag job" at Dr. Lewis Fielding's office was undertaken by the White House Special Investigations Unit (which has gone down in history as the "Plumbers") for the purpose of gaining information to be used in a CIA psychological profile of Ellsberg, the man who had leaked the Pentagon Papers.

In fact, one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Plumbers was the perception of the Nixon White House that the FBI, under the guidance of J. Edgar Hoover, was going less than gangbusters in its investigation of the Pentagon Papers leak. As Richard Nixon wrote in his autobiography: "I wanted someone to light a fire under the FBI in its investigation of Ellsberg and to keep the departments and agencies active in pursuit of leakers."

RICHARD DOYLE
FLANDERS, NJ

A LOYAL WEST FAN

Thanks and praise to Donald Lyons for his stunningly perfect review of the works of Rebecca West ("Rebecca West's Legacy," Oct. 28). His analysis of the shortcomings of her critics was a delight, as well as his belief in the significance of her ideas and the wondrous beauty of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

My copy of this book was given to me on my 38th birthday in 1943. It is a fat blue hardcover book with a picture of the bridge at Mostar on the cover, much worn now by my holding of it for fifty years.

VIVIAN RANDLEV
ORRS ISLAND, ME

NOTHING NEW

When Robert Kagan quotes Martin Walker about "living in an era of geo-economics" where "the new virility symbols are exports and productivity and growth rates," neither is speaking of anything new ("Clinton and Indonesia: The Real Scandal," Nov. 4). Thucydides wrote of how the new commercial economies of Athens and Corinth changed the Peloponnesian balance of power in the fifth century B.C. The Byzantine Empire used its wealth to back its diplomacy. There was the rise of the Dutch Empire and its fall before the mercantilist policies of England and France. Even the discovery of the New World was an outgrowth of the commercial rivalry of Italian merchants looking for a sea route to Asia. Then came the Commercial and Industrial revolutions, which transformed both domestic governments and international affairs into the modern pattern.

What is new is the attempt to drop the "geo" from geo-economics and talk of industry, trade, and finance as if they were autonomous elements divorced from national society and international relations. Decisions affecting the location of factories and the development or transfer of technology across borders are now to be left to business to manage on its own (and for its own ends).

There is now a split between geographically unrooted global business and national governments responsible for the security and prosperity of their citizens in a defined territory rooted in history and culture. The vast majority of people live and work, formulate values and loyalties, on a local rather than a global basis. Transnational corporations know no borders, are loyal to no flag, and feel no moral obligations to communities or individuals. The clash is fundamental.

The Clinton administration has embraced and exploited the change in business orientation, as evidenced by the foreign-contributions scandal. The Lippo Group, founded by Chinese expatriates and operating in scores of countries, is the quintessential transnational enterprise.

In contrast, Republicans have the opportunity to act as true conservatives by becoming the defenders of the nation against the new globalist corporate raiders. Had the GOP laid the groundwork in previous years for the kind of appeal Bob Dole launched in the last month of his campaign, the party would have found both the outrage and the votes it needed.

WILLIAM R. HAWKINS
WASHINGTON, DC

CCRI AND THE KING LEGACY

THE WEEKLY STANDARD is correct to blast the California GOP for its cynical and opportunistic last-minute support for the California Civil Rights Initiative (Scrapbook, Nov. 4). You are wrong, however, to call the GOP's use of Martin Luther King, Jr. a "misappropriation." King's dream that people be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin, is one of the most eloquent pleas for a colorblind society ever uttered. Those who stand against the new racism of quotas and racial preferences should never surrender King to the neo-racists. It is the neo-racists who have misappropriated King.

GLENN SHELLER
PICKERINGTON, OH

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Privatization—the key to welfare reform

All social programs were born originally out of good intentions to handle some obvious need. The invariable problem is abuse of the programs. Government's solution has been typical all-or-nothing regulation. Food stamps were intended to ensure nobody starved. But the system merely created a new form of quasicurrency, bought and sold on a growing black market. Typical government solution? Eliminate the program.

Privatizing feeds people *and* reduces corruption.

Reform of the food stamp program *can* be accomplished without forsaking the original intention. Instead of creating a quasicurrency redeemable for anything — including beer and cigarettes — let food manufacturers bid to provide the basic necessities. Bakers with the lowest bread bid issue bread coupons. The coupon has no face value; it's only good for a loaf of that baker's bread. The store would be able to redeem the coupon only with the distributor, ending the cash black market. Only the bakers need be audited, to ensure they delivered the bread for the coupons issued; the government would pay the bid amount.

Such a system eliminates fraud, black-market brokering, and encourages competition. Even more importantly, the recipients would be able to use the coupons only for specific products, ensuring healthy, nutritional foods for the family, a return to the original intention.

Free enterprise programs work in the real world.

Far too often government attempts wonderful social programs totally disregarding basic human nature: People will break the system. When corruption becomes too great, the truly needy are harmed by those who exploit the system for a quick profit.

The key to designing a good program, including taxation, is to ask, simply: "How could one circumvent this?" Government lives in a dream world where static models are employed because they argue nobody can forecast the future. But that static world assumes no change. In effect, government guarantees every program will fail in its goal. In the end a corrupt system merely brings down the house. The reciprocal is also true: The closer you get to free enterprise, the harder the circumvention and the stronger the program.

It is time reality wins over idealistic theory. If we cannot deal with corruption in an honest way, worthwhile intentions will be thwarted. That leaves us with only a system of death and taxes.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:

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the weekly Standard

Richard Jewell and President Clinton

America is a land without heroes these days. Indeed, we have become almost obsessed with the idea that there is no such thing as heroism. Our journalism, once full of breathless stories about the Herculean efforts of powerful men and the selfless acts of ordinary folk, has become mostly an exercise in debunkery. (Remember the reprehensible efforts of Sidney Blumenthal and the *Nation* to accuse George Bush and Bob Dole of cowardice, not bravery, during wartime?) Biographies, which used to follow the model of Parson Weems's hagiographic life of George Washington, seek instead to cut their subjects down to size.

And now, it appears, our law-enforcement agencies are following suit. Did a security guard named Richard Jewell spot a suspicious package at Centennial Park during the Atlanta Olympics and immediately hurry people away from it, thus saving countless lives? This may not exactly have been *heroic*, but it was a very, very good thing, the sort of thing that Jewell and his family could have been proud of for the rest of his life. Instead, the FBI took one look at this overweight fellow desperate to spend his life enforcing the law and said: *killer.*

It had no evidence. None at all. In fact, the geography of Centennial Park told the tale; Jewell could not have gotten from the phone where a warning call about the bomb was made to the spot where he was standing when he saw the bomb in time. No matter. He fit some ludicrous, psychobabblical "profile" of a mad bomber conjured up by the wizards at Quantico—you know, the resourceful witch-doctors you saw figure out who a mass murderer was from almost no evidence but their brilliant psychological insights in *The Silence of the Lambs*. But *The Silence of the Lambs* was a movie.

And so the FBI destroyed Richard Jewell's life. It did so first by pursuing him with no real cause, and second by being either so lax or so irresponsible as to allow word that he was a suspect to leak to the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* and NBC. Upon getting the tip that the FBI suspected somebody—just *suspected* somebody—the *Journal and Constitution* published an "Extra" and NBC hit the air with puppy-dog excitement at a big scoop.

And this simple 33-year-old unmarried man living with his mother had his mother's house turned upside down and his innocence called into question by one of those horrible journalist wolf-packs that look for all the world like a lynch mob. "For 88 days," Jewell said in his halting and moving statement last week, "I felt like a hunted animal."

But worse than the public exposure and the private inconvenience must have been the icy, sleep-depriving terror Jewell surely felt. He didn't commit a terrible crime, but with the FBI clearly so eager to pin it on him, who knew what evidence they might "find," what slender reed they might choose to hang an entire case on?

To be faced with injustice in a country you once thought just is a terrible, terrible thing. And that is what Richard Jewell went through for three months—three months during which the FBI had every reason in the world to tell him and the public he was no longer a suspect. It never did. It fell to the U.S. attorney's office in Atlanta to release Jewell from the tortures of his own mind and the disgrace into which he had been cast.

The FBI's conduct in this case is repugnant and deserving of congressional scrutiny for various reasons. First, it is probably true that FBI field agents and FBI headquarters in Washington weren't directing this investigation. The Olympics offered the biggest terrorist target in years, and the games began two weeks after TWA Flight 800 exploded over Long Island. The goings-on at the Olympics were not simply a law-enforcement matter; they were a profound political issue that fell smack-dab in the middle of Bill Clinton's reelection campaign. Surely there was a White House-Justice Department task force made up of senior government officials. Surely no move was made on Jewell without some consultation with FBI director Louis Freeh's office, Janet Reno's office—and the White House.

And what a suspect Jewell must have seemed! A fat, unmarried loser living with his mother! "The

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great white defendant," as Tom Wolfe called the dream of every New York prosecutor in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. Men like Richard Jewell have no interest group to demonstrate on their behalf—an Arab suspect would have raised complaints about a witch hunt, for example. And if it were just some loser, if the bombing weren't a geopolitical incident, then Clinton could return to his happy-face campaign in time to talk his soothing nonsense about "building a bridge to the 21st century."

Don't worry about Jewell, cool heads around Washington and New York have been saying all week. *This is the best thing that ever happened to him. He'll make a million dollars.* This, again, is simply a way of wooing us into somnolence, of luring us into forgetting that a severe injustice was done that must be addressed. Because it allows everybody involved to escape responsibility and culpability.

Immediately upon Jewell's exoneration, media watchers and press people fell all over themselves seeking to place the blame on the FBI. "There was nothing we could do," they said, "once we were told who the suspect was. And we reported the truth. He was a suspect. This is certainly a shame." No. It was a crime. It may not have been a crime in the formal sense, but it was a crime in the moral sense. The editors of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* and the majordomos at NBC News are responsible for the fact that the world came to know an innocent man as a suspect in one of the crimes of the century. Are they having trouble sleeping? Have they, perhaps, even given one hint of a thought to resigning to show they understand the gravity of their actions?

Well, maybe they were struck by pangs of conscience late at night, but clearly nobody's quitting nothing. And why should they? We now live in a country where the attorney general announces that the buck stopped with her on the Waco fire that left 81 dead and stays happily in her job after being lionized in the press for—for what? For taking responsibility? She took no responsibility. This week, the attorney general assured us that she had launched an inquiry "to make sure we are held accountable." We'll believe in that accountability if someone—someone high up—loses his job. We already know better than to expect any resignations.

Of course, the attorney general works for a man, William Jefferson Clinton, whose entire public life is an exercise in the avoidance of accountability and responsibility. He lies, he demagogues, he stonewalls. And he gets away with it. Because he is part of—the primary representative of—a new culture in which heroes are turned into villains so that the mediocre can live with consciences untroubled by their mediocrity, their careers unmarked by accountability, their jobs unburdened of responsibility. ♦

Clinton's Media Woes

by Fred Barnes

For the past two years, President Clinton has gotten gentle, sometimes flattering treatment in the media. Now, the cycle of good press is over. The intense, unfriendly coverage of the foreign-contributions flap indicates what's in store for Clinton in a second presidential term: rougher handling by the press. No, he won't be dealt with as brutally as a Republican president would be. But he and his aides will notice a distinct change (some already have). The simple fact is the press has turned against Clinton.

It's no coincidence the media perked up when the fund-raising story blossomed in mid-October. Before then, reporters had failed to pursue such juicy subjects as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's censuring of Hillary Clinton and credible testimony that the White House's acquisition of FBI files on Republicans was no accident. But Clinton was a candidate then, still struggling to defeat Bob Dole and his conservative allies. Consciously or not, the press was wary of zinging Clinton if that might abet conservatives. By mid-October, however, practically everyone in the press believed Clinton had locked up his reelection. That mattered enormously. "The media seem to love Clinton when he campaigns and hate him when he governs," says Robert Lichter of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. Having brushed Dole aside, Clinton was, in effect, in governing mode again. So the press pounced.

A good example is mild-mannered, apolitical Charles Gibson, host of ABC's *Good Morning America*. He was suddenly outraged. "We now have the Democratic party hiding this guy John Huang until after the election, who was out raising money," Gibson fumed on October 29. "You've got rafts of big contributions all listing the same address, which is the Democratic national headquarters. *Newsweek* says you have the ambassador to Taiwan out there soliciting gifts from people, businessmen in Taiwan, and you have Buddhist monks and nuns who have taken vows of poverty

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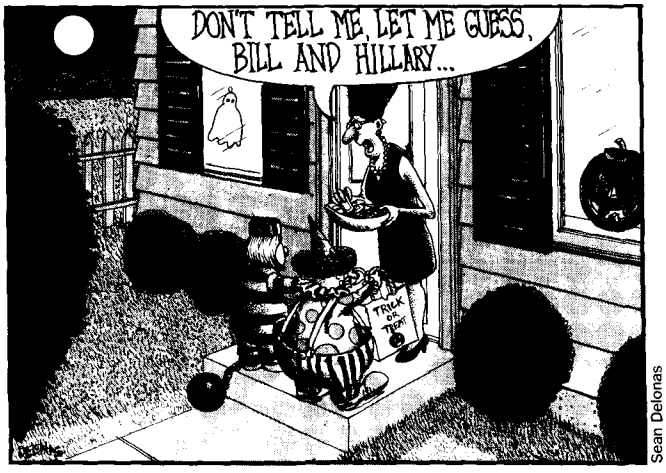
giving big amounts of money. . . . Somebody said the other day if the Republicans had done this the press would be killing them. Why are they getting away with this?"

They aren't. Instead, the natural course of scandal coverage is being played out. First, the major newspapers—the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*—got on the story. The print press is a leading indicator. Then television, usually a lagging indicator, jumped in (though ABC's Brian Ross had started covering the story early on). If the networks needed a push, it came on October 29 when it was disclosed the Democratic National Committee wouldn't file its final pre-election compilation of contributions with the Federal Election Commission. That act of arrogance, together with the emergence of Democratic fund-raiser John Huang from hiding, moved the scandal to the top of the evening-news agenda. The White House was on the defensive. At a breakfast with reporters that morning, White House press secretary Mike McCurry, who has chummy personal relations with reporters, was pummeled with questions about fund-raising.



Sean Delonas

Why is the tougher coverage bound to continue? For one thing, reporters feel vaguely guilty about having given Clinton a free ride. It's not quite the shame many felt after George Bush won the presidency in 1988. That was largely a matter of distaste for the conservative issues (Willie Horton, the flag, etc.) Bush used against Michael Dukakis. In Clinton's case, there's a sense of buyer's remorse. The media's kind coverage has helped Clinton. Yet the press may have created a monster, a reelected president given to stonewalling and inaccessibility. "There's a well of resentment [against Clinton]," says a veteran White House reporter. "He's not going to be playing to a happy crowd. It's true all over town, but it's especially true at the White House." One senior reporter recently advised McCurry to quit before a second Clinton term because relations with the press are certain to be mean and sour.

Another factor is the abundance of negative stories to cover. Independent counsel Kenneth Starr hasn't gone away. On the contrary, he's improved his reputation with the Washington press corps by lying low during the presidential campaign. He even backed off when Susan McDougal, the convicted former business partner of the Clintons, accused him of using unethical tactics to nail the president. Meanwhile, his portfolio of investigations has expanded to include a probe of whether ex-White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum lied about Hillary Clinton's role in Travelgate. "This is dead serious," declared Tim Russert on the October 27 *Meet the Press*. "I mean the ethical problems of the Clinton administration are now troubling even to the most partisan Democrats."

There's one more factor that guarantees less friendly coverage of Clinton. The press goes after whoever is top dog in Washington. That was Clinton in his first two years, and he got unfavorable coverage. House speaker Newt Gingrich replaced him at the top in 1995 and 1996, and the media pilloried him. In fact, Clinton purposely hibernated for months to leave Gingrich alone at the top, giving the press a single target. Now, Gingrich has been neutered and Clinton is top dog again. That makes concentrated media scrutiny all but inevitable. Clinton won't be mauled the way Gingrich was, of course, but he'll be bruised, perhaps badly.

Skeptics don't have to take my word for it that Clinton is doomed to a spate of bad press; the folks who follow media coverage closely think so too. "Reporters have a growing sense Clinton has broken some rules to get where he is," says Richard Noyes of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. "He's beaten Bob Dole, but he hasn't yet beaten the Washington establishment." The press is a big part of that establishment. Adds media critic Howard Kurtz of the *Washington Post*: "The combination of Clinton's likely re-election and all this red meat in the form of questionable foreign donations has reporters salivating in Clinton's direction in a way we haven't seen in a long time. The press is poised to give this president a very hard time and there are a lot of timebombs." Reporters "will land on Clinton with both feet after the election, just as they did in the first months of his tenure," echoes Carl Leubsdorf, Washington bureau chief of the *Dallas Morning News*.

At the White House, McCurry is bracing for trouble. "It'll be a lot tougher," he told me. McCurry sees

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the coverage of the fund-raising scandal as a precursor. Reporters could have unearthed plenty of dubious donations to Bob Dole if they'd wanted to, he says. But they weren't interested because Dole was "toast" by mid-October. "There used to be something called a honeymoon," says McCurry. The president "didn't get one the first term. I suppose he won't get one this time." Not a chance. ♦

Tommy Thompson Gunner

by Craig Gilbert

BUMMED OUT BY ANOTHER can't-do candidacy, miffed that his "battleground" state got bumped from the battle plan, Tommy Thompson took a stunning home-stretch shot at the top of the ticket. "I thought George Bush's campaign was probably the poorest-run presidential campaign," the governor of Wisconsin told Don Imus on his October 18 radio show. "And I think this is a close second."

Have you shared this with the Dole people? Imus asked. "I've told them I've been disappointed," Thompson said, "but they have stopped talking to me as of about a week ago." If those comments speak loudly about the Dole campaign, they say a lot about Thompson, too: a prideful, pull-no-punches politician with a penchant for pummeling the opposition.

Just a decade or so ago, Thompson was a small-town Wisconsin pol with a bad haircut, a bad nickname ("Dr. No"), and a bad rap (shrill, right-wing obstructionist). The business editor of the state's largest daily lambasted his "high-decibel, low-IQ rhetoric." The head of the state's Democratic party said his IQ was "smaller than my bra size." A Republican rival called him a "two-bit hack."

To his doubters, he was dull of mind and thick of tongue, a bush-league lawyer-legislator whose exuberant ambition far outstripped his political, intellectual, and oratorical talent. "All of you thought I was gonna fall flat on my face," Thompson told writers and editors at the *Milwaukee Journal* years later. "Didn't think I could govern."

Today he is the country's second-most senior governor, the father of state-based radical welfare reform, and a legitimate if longshot presidential prospect. He even made Bob Dole's veep list, a helpless waiting game he compared to "roasting on a spit." The Thompson tenure in Wisconsin—chronicled in his new book, *Power to the People*—has been epoch-making: the end of the welfare entitlement; the first religious-school voucher law (now in court); state-imposed caps on local school spending; a massive state buy-down of local school property taxes; an explosion of prison-building; the arrival of large-scale gambling in Wisconsin; and a revolution in the possibilities and power of the governor's office.

He is the state's first enduring, high-profile Republican politician in 30 years. In his 1994 landslide, he became the first Republican to carry the city of Milwaukee in a governor's race in nearly 50 years and helped his party end a quarter-century of futility by wresting control of the state assembly. Exit polls showed he got more than half the union vote, and precinct returns suggested he got a third of Milwaukee's black vote.

In a party with unpopular national standard-bearers like Newt Gingrich, success stories like Thompson's scream out for study. How does a Republican deliver on an aggressive conservative agenda in a famously "progressive" state—and stay popular? In Thompson's case, the answers lie partly in his personal style and partly in his agenda, neither one of which is classically conservative. Thompson is, above everything else, an activist. His approach to governing couldn't be less laissez-faire.

"I'm a builder," he loves to say, and he is: a road builder, a prison builder, a stadium builder, a party builder, an image builder, an empire builder. His activism has taken him in conservative directions, like cutting corporate taxes and making welfare recipients work. It has taken him in a few liberal directions, like buying up large wilderness tracts for preservation.

In *Power To The People*, ideology is a bad word. "I am not an ideologue," he writes. "I'm a doer." Ideology may be good for, well, ideas, but "it may not work in the real world at a given time. . . . My solutions didn't always fit the doctrine of the Heritage Foundation," he tells us, "and I don't litter my speeches with all the buzzwords or the philosophies of Edmund Burke or Friedrich Hayek."

This is partly a pose, of course: What politician cheerfully admits to being an ideologue? But it is more or less true to the man, a career politician once sneered at by journalists, academics, and ruling Democrats, an elastic, flexible, practical, slightly unpredictable student of power. He is the Republican least likely to commit Gingrich's mistake of getting way out in front of public opinion and ceding the rhetorical center to the enemy.

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When Thompson started running on welfare ten years ago, he was out in front of opinion leaders, but not voters. He knew that welfare was a huge issue in the high-benefit state of Wisconsin. During his tenure, it has served him politically like nothing else. It is not only his source of national identity. It is the issue Wisconsin voters most associate him with. And there is almost no political downside to being a welfare-reformer today. A good listener, Thompson figured that out before most others.

Even on his most popular crusades, Thompson has been careful and incremental in advancing his agenda. Before his sweeping W-2 welfare overhaul came a long series of highly publicized but very limited experiments. He slashed benefits when he got in, but later poured new money into day-care and training and support services, making his brand of welfare reform look almost liberal compared with plans hatched later by a GOP Congress.

Tommy Thompson

Kent Lemon

Thompson happens to be a pro-life Catholic, but among his governing priorities, abortion ranks somewhere beneath recycling. His social issues are crime and welfare, not school prayer. The culture war is divisive, and Thompson is almost Clintonesque in his drive for affirmation, his wish to be embraced across political fault lines, and his desire to appeal simultaneously to historically contentious constituencies. (Bill Clinton in De Pere, Wisconsin, on Labor Day: "Let's say the Democrats are pro-business *and* pro-labor." Thompson in his book: "I am a pro-business governor. And a pro-union governor.")

To activism, pragmatism, and populism, another "ism" can be added: boosterism. Boosterism has done for Thompson what good-natured optimism did for Ronald Reagan: expand his personal appeal beyond his partisan base. Thompson is obsessed by state rankings and intensely competitive about Wisconsin's standing, whether measured in jobs or business starts or Rose Bowls or the cranberry crop. That boosterism, too, knows no ideology. Despite his record as a tax-cutter, Thompson pushed a local sales-tax hike to build a new ballpark for the Milwaukee Brewers. It was the least popular thing he has ever done and, revealingly, the one he has spent the most political capital on.

Two other things have been immensely helpful to Thompson's career. One is Wisconsin's bountiful economy, for which the governor claims some credit. Thanks to years of uninterrupted growth, Thompson has been able to pay for new programs without tax increases. Or put another way, he's been able to cut a few taxes without slashing popular programs. Even after ten years of Thompson, Wisconsin remains a high-tax, high-service state. Under this Republican governor, state spending has gone up faster than inflation.

The other boon to Thompson has been the state's extraordinary gubernatorial veto. Thanks to a constitutional quirk and its expansive interpretation by recent courts, the governor can rewrite legislation by creatively deleting sentences and words and numbers to render new phrases and new sentences and new meaning. In other words, the executive can legislate. Thus, in a purely constitutional sense, he may be the most powerful governor in the country. He has used his bionic veto thousands of times, and with a certain disconcerting swagger. As solicitous as he can be, Thompson also has an arrogant streak. In speeches, he often invites his opponents to just "get out of the way." After Milwaukee archbishop Rembert Weakland criticized his welfare overhaul on the op-ed pages of the *Washington Post*, an indignant Thompson demanded an apology and told the prelate to "read his Bible."

That's vintage Thompson. So is a curious but telling anecdote in *Power to the People* about how he got hooked on politics. During a senior-year college internship on Capitol Hill, one figure impressed him more than all the others, a commanding political presence with a forceful, straight-talking style "that took over the room when he spoke. . . . It seemed as if we were compelled to listen. He spoke without notes for forty-five minutes, and none of us missed a word.

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Upon returning from Washington I enrolled in law school at the University of Wisconsin, determined to run for political office someday."

The awe-inspiring speaker? Not Barry Goldwater. Not Bobby Kennedy. It was union boss Jimmy Hoffa. Not exactly a young Republican's role model, but something that appealed to Thompson more: a figure of power, a larger-than-life tough guy.

Thompson has carefully cultivated his own power as governor, appreciates the unique command and authority and respect a governor enjoys—the next best thing to the Oval Office for an American politician—and has made it clear he regards such career options as senator or cabinet secretary as rather slavish in comparison.

During Thompson's tenure, the office of governor has only become more appealing and powerful across the country, as states assert their influence over welfare and other federal programs. The men and woman running these "laboratories of democracy" are having the time of their lives. For ambitious, action-oriented Republican governors like Thompson, devolution is no doubt consistent with a certain ideological tradition. But it's also consistent with the relish they bring to being in charge and in control of a large enterprise. After all, the power is flowing their way. If one of these governors gets elected president someday, you will wonder how much relish he will bring to devolution, if it's *his* power that's devolving.

Craig Gilbert is a political reporter for the **Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.**

Dr. Hern and Mr. Clinton

by Dave Shiflett

There's a strong element of wishful thinking in the idea that Bill Clinton is an unprincipled poll surfer; he was brought around on welfare reform, some conservatives argue, and he can probably be brought around on most anything else. This may be a misreading of the president, especially on the subject of late abortions. He has taken a very lonely stand in their favor—a stand for the right to extract a near-term fetus. That positions him at the fringe of the issue—three-quarters of Americans oppose the practice. It also makes him, whether he likes it or not, a political ally of people like Colorado abortionist Warren Hern, whose worldview will probably strike most Americans as every bit as unsettling as David Duke's.

Dr. Hern, by design or otherwise, is not very well known in policy circles. His name did pop up just before the election when he engaged in a remarkable exchange with pro-choice *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen. Cohen, who had initially supported the availability of late abortions, later wrote a column confessing a grave unease. "Late-term abortions once seemed to be the choice of women who, really, had no other choice," Cohen concluded. "The facts now are different. If that's the case, then so should be the law."

This drew a quick response from Hern, a member of the medical advisory board of the National Abortion Federation. His own practice at the Boulder Abortion Clinic is, in his words, "internationally known as specializing in late abortion." Hern complained that, among other things, Bob Dole and unnamed "anti-abortion fanatics" were misleading the public, all for the purpose of criminalizing some procedures, including partial-birth abortion.

Because Hern is, by his own description, one of the "very few physicians who provide third-trimester abortions," he is a primary beneficiary of President Clinton's advocacy of abortion at any stage. So if it is fair to ask political leaders who support anti-quota legislation if they support David Duke's onerous worldview, it is at least as fair—and in fact much fairer—to ask the president if he shares Hern's assumptions. Hern, after all, is not at the fringe of his issue. He holds a central position among the abortion elite.

He's also spooky as hell.

There are three aspects of late abortions that most Americans will find unsettling. First, the procedure itself. Second, the secrecy that surrounds the industry. Third, the philosophical beliefs that animate late-term abortionists. Hern speaks directly to each.

Hern's 1984 book, *Abortion Practice*, contains the sort of language that turns American stomachs during any discussion of late abortion, including this electrifying passage in a section about abortions at 21 to 24 weeks: "A long curved Mayo scissors may be necessary to decapitate and dismember the fetus, since it may be impossible to apply forceps or to do so while avoiding the thinned-out cervix."

One need not dwell on these unpleasantries to underscore the horror of late abortions. The point is perhaps best made in a 1978 survey by Hern and an assistant of attitudes toward the dilation and evacuation (D&E) procedure on the part of 15 present and

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former staff members of Hern's clinic. Their reactions to "viewing the fetus" ranged from

> 'I haven't looked' to shock, dismay, amazement, disgust, fear, and sadness. Attitudes toward the doctor were those of sympathy, wonder at how he could perform the procedure at all, and a desire to protect him from the trauma. Two felt that it must eventually damage him psychologically. . . . Two respondents described dreams in which they had related to the procedure. Both described dreams of vomiting fetuses along with a sense of horror. Other dreams revolved around a need to protect others from viewing fetal parts dreaming that she herself was pregnant and needed an abortion or was having a baby.

Hern and his co-author, however, had a slightly different take on the subject: "We have reached a point in this particular technology where there is no possibility of denial of an act of destruction by the operator. It is before one's eyes. The sensations of dismemberment flow through the forceps like an electric current." A somewhat ghoulish observation, one might suggest, and perhaps a lot ghoulish. Even the most devoted Quentin Tarantino fan, after hearing this passage, would have cause to reflect that the abortion elite are a bit different from you and me.

Hern does, however, recommend that his colleagues take pains to keep the particulars of their trade from public scrutiny. He evidently understands that most Americans, if they knew what the abortion providers were up to, might consider them every bit as fanatical as the people who chant slogans outside clinics.

"It is in the interest of the abortion service to use the social status of the physician and the legitimate medical activity associated with the physician to overcome community resistance to the abortion service," he has written. "For the physician, particularly one in solo practice, this can mean establishing, displaying, or maintaining all the substance and appearance of a 'normal' professional status to the extent possible and obtaining, by proxy, acceptance of one's activity with regards to abortion."

This policy of secrecy and obfuscation extends to the patients themselves. "This is a controversial area, but most professionals in the field feel that it is not advisable for patients to view the products of conception, to be told the sex of the fetus, or to be informed of a multiple pregnancy." Similarly, in a section of his book dedicated to "Dealing With The News Media," Hern advises that physicians and administrators "should provide as much factual information as possible, but the information should be appropriate for public consumption. Television interviews, in particular, should focus on the public issue involved (right to confidential and professional medical care, freedom of choice, and so forth) and not on the specific details of the abortion procedures."

This penchant for clouding the issue sometimes reaches a level that is, to put it as generously as possible, comic. In a 1991 letter to the *Rocky Mountain News*, Hern complained that a columnist's "characterization of me in his April 29th column as 'Boulder abortionist Warren Hern' was a deliberate insult that reveals his antipathy toward me, toward the cause I serve, and toward women." The word abortionist, Hern insisted, is a "demeaning, degrading term that conveys evil and disgrace."

This from a man who has elsewhere bragged of performing tens of thousands of abortions. The level of absurdity would be no higher should Michael DeBakey complain about being called a cardiologist.

Taken together, the nature of the procedures and the secrecy surrounding the industry are unsettling enough. Of deeper significance, however, are the philosophical beliefs of this late-term abortionist.

Hern minces no words. "The relationship between the gravid [pregnant] female and the fetoplacental unit can be understood best as one of host and parasite," he writes in *Abortion Practice*. This single sentence draws a dramatic distinction between those who take the traditional view that life is a sacred gift and those whose search for truth has led them in the opposite direction. *Fetoplacental unit*? That sounds like an expression that might fall from the lips of Ma or Pa Conehead. It has the same effect as Hern's relegation of human life to tapeworm status. Though Hern fancies himself a humanist, his language is thoroughly dehumanizing.

This creepy view extends to those units living far beyond the womb. After the *Boulder Daily Camera* criticized Hern's comparison of humanity to the most feared of diseases, he offered this response: "As Marcus Aurelius said, 'For I seek the truth, by which no man was ever hurt.' The idea that the human species is a cancer on the planet is a powerful metaphor that may help explain reality and predict events."

Coming from a garden-variety environmentalist, a comparison of humanity to cancer is an eye-roller. It takes on a more chilling aspect when delivered by an abortion practitioner.

The unconventional beliefs of various pro-lifers, gun enthusiasts, militiamen, and even, in the 1992 election, Dan Quayle's wife's parents' minister all became media staples. The unwillingness to publicize the jarring views of the abortion elite offers more proof that most reporters and commentators are not so much pro-choice as they are defenders of practices that Richard Cohen, among many others, finds incompatible with reasonable and civilized behavior. The president should have some explaining to do. But somehow, he's never asked about it.

Dave Shiflett is a writer living in northern Virginia.

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RONALD REAGAN WAS RIGHT

The Panama Canal, Twenty Years Later

By Thomas M. DeFrank

Panama City, Panama

Every American schoolkid knows the story. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt essentially stole the province of Panama away from Colombia, used American troops to guarantee its independence, and committed U.S. technological prowess to building a great ditch linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Panama Canal was more than an engineering wonder of the world, however. It was a national icon, a symbol of the ingenuity, determination, and benevolence of the United States of America. "I took Panama," TR would later crow. Now we're giving it back.

At high noon on December 31, 1999, under terms of the 1977 treaty negotiated by President Carter, the Panama Canal becomes the sole property of the Republic of Panama. Eighty-two years old, fastidiously maintained by a highly professional work force, the canal is still in splendid operating condition. The United States has run the canal as a non-profit, international utility, which was not only generous but necessary for world commerce; two-thirds of the cargo that passes through the waterway is either coming from or going to the United States. Panama won't be so selfless when it takes over management of the canal; the waterway generates nearly $500 million in annual revenues, an irresistible cash cow for a poor country. Panama could raise tolls inordinately or, still worse, skimp on maintenance to steer money into government programs or the pockets of corrupt Panamanian politicians. If these things happen, says an American diplomat who helped negotiate the treaties, "they'll kill the golden goose dead."

THE UNITED STATES RAN THE CANAL AS A NON-PROFIT INTERNATIONAL UTILITY. PANAMA HOPES IT WILL BE A GOLDEN GOOSE. FAT CHANCE.

The golden goose is already tarnished in America's Hong Kong. The ports at both ends of the canal have fallen into disrepair. The Panama Canal Railroad died a few years after Panama took it over; its passenger cars now rot and rust in barns or along abandoned tracks. Colon, the Atlantic port city where many American servicemen and their families once lived, has been declared off-limits to U.S. soldiers because of rampant crime and drugs. The Bay of Panama off Fort Amador is dangerously polluted and gives off a terrible stench. Locals call it the Bay of Cholera.

The U.S. bases remain all-American enclaves, with their swimming pools, ball fields, and fast food drive-thru restaurants. But crime is an increasing problem. In recent months, thieves have breached security at Quarry Heights, the headquarters of U.S. troops in Latin America. Several autos have been hot-wired and brazenly driven off post, and even the homes of general officers have been burglarized.

Security at bases in the old U.S. Canal Zone controlled by Panamanians ranges from lax to non-existent. After being repeatedly warned I'd be wasting my time trying to gain entry without permission, I drove onto two of them without being challenged by guards. I didn't even have to roll down the window for a cursory explanation of my intentions.

It's easy to see why the Panamanians are skittish about visitors. The jungle has reclaimed parts of Fort Gulick (now Fort Espinar). The School of the Americas, where the U.S. Army once trained thousands of Latin American soldiers, is a gutted hulk, plucked to its foundations by looters; even the wiring, light sockets, and plumbing are gone. "Stripping is our national sport," says a Panamanian security guard.

The jewel in the crown of American properties almost certainly will be next. A breathtakingly beautiful boot-shaped piece of prime real estate at the south end of the canal, Fort Amador was divided into American and Panamanian zones in 1979. The U.S. side remained as perfectly manicured as a Singapore neigh-

Thomas M. DeFrank, a veteran White House correspondent, collaborated with James A. Baker III and Ed Rollins on their memoirs.

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borhood, while the Panamanian zone became littered with trash and debris and blighted with empty barracks. On September 30, the United States turned over its portion of Amador to Panama. Already it is beginning to go to seed.

So it appears Ronald Reagan was right when he declared in 1976 that Americans not only built and paid for the canal but are needed to keep it operating efficiently. Through bureaucratic mismanagement and indifferent maintenance, Panamanians have spent 17 years letting the former Canal Zone deteriorate. Is the canal itself next? A constitutional amendment and other legal changes to guarantee the canal's independence from the Panamanian government are in the works, and Panamanian president Ernesto Perez Balladares is committed to safeguarding the canal's autonomy. But many Panamanian leaders are privately skeptical such measures can effectively insulate the canal. "If we allow [the canal] to fall into the hands of the politicians," says Fernando Manfredo, Jr., the first Panamanian deputy administrator, "that will be the end of it."

THROUGH BUREAUCRATIC MISMANAGEMENT AND INDIFFERENT MAINTENANCE, PANAMANIANS HAVE SPENT 17 YEARS LETTING THE ZONE DETERIORATE.

The turn of the century will also bring an end to the American military presence in Panama, a constant since the first Panama Canal treaty was signed in 1903. At the precise instant the canal goes over, the American military is also supposed to be out of Panama—lock, stock, and Burger King. Over the next three years, the last 7,400 U.S. troops will ship out, and Panama will inherit 3,600 buildings and 71,000 acres of military real estate. The Panamanians and their struggling economy aren't remotely ready to absorb those installations, which brings up the question: How right *was* Ronald Reagan, whose crusade against the Panama Canal treaty was a key to his growing national popularity in the 1970s? Should the treaty be abrogated? *Could it be abrogated?*

"For the last 17 years, Latin America has been watching to see if the United States would live up to its treaty obligations, and they've seen that our word is good," says Joe Reeder, the forceful under secretary of the Army who moonlights as chairman of the Panama Canal Commission and is Panama's firmest friend in the Clinton administration.

The transition is already a fait accompli. The administrator, a majority of the board, 92 percent of the commission's 7,500-man work force, and two-thirds of its managers are Panamanian. By law, Reeder can overrule his board, but he never has and never will. "We're one team with one mission," he says, "and that mission is to make sure the canal operates as effectively and efficiently in the next hundred years as it has in the first hundred."

Reeder says that "the era of Big Brother is over in this hemisphere." Maybe so, but negotiations are underway to keep a 4,000-person American military force in Panama and leave some bases in U.S. hands. That might assure investors that Panama won't fall prey to another dictator or drug cartel. And it would keep American pressure on the Panamanian government to hesitate before diverting the canal's proceeds for its own purposes.

Perez Balladares would like to find a way to let the Americans stay, and a huge majority of his countrymen agree with him. Economic benefit, not nostalgia or altruism, is the overwhelming rationale. "If soldiers leave," a cab driver says, "Panama cries." Why is that? "Dollars," he grins between munches on a Whopper with cheese.

But the United States may exit anyway. After two visits to the isthmus in the summer and more than sixty interviews, I'm convinced that a post-1999 U.S. military presence is very much in doubt. Negotiations are in limbo, and time is the greatest enemy of an agreement. Many of the most fervent supporters of a deal in both nations are increasingly pessimistic.

As a matter of sovereign pride and political necessity, Perez Balladares is wary of antagonizing the vocal nationalist minority that wants America out—Panama craves Uncle Sam's real estate. But the government can't afford to maintain it. In April, former president Nicolas Barletta, chairman of Panama's Interoceanic Regional Authority, told me his agency was spending $250,000 a month to mothball facilities already turned over by the U.S. military. But the contractor had never been paid and got a check for several months of back pay only after Panamanian officials learned this article was being prepared. And these expenses are only about 4 percent of what it's going to cost Panama just to maintain all the bases they'll be getting at the end of the century. Barletta, by the way, has grandiose schemes to create a resort, a casino, a hotel-management school, an industrial park, and more on former U.S. territory. "It's fantasyland," says a skeptical Panamanian official.

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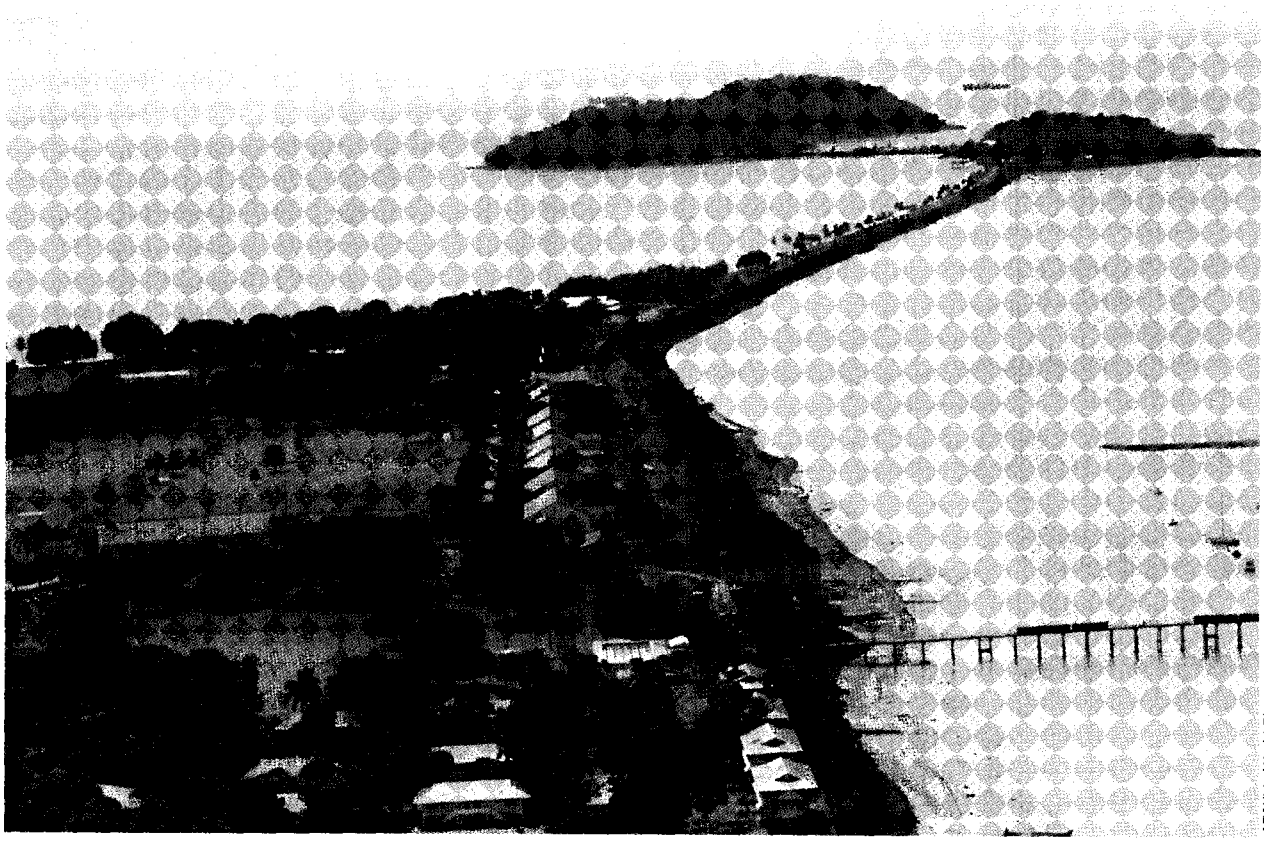
The Panamanians have been fully warned. In 1995, Gen. Barry McCaffrey, then commander in chief of the U.S. Southern Command and now President Clinton's drug czar, invited Perez Balladares to his headquarters at Quarry Heights for a friendly, Dutch-uncle talk. McCaffrey emphasized to the Panamanian leader that it costs U.S. taxpayers $80 million a year just to operate and maintain the bases Panama will be getting.

"His jaw dropped," says an official present at McCaffrey's briefing. "He had no idea what just the housekeeping will cost him." But he *did* understand the math. Panama's cut on canal shipping tolls was $80.2 million last year—all of which goes directly into the strapped national treasury. In other words, simply maintaining U.S. bases in the short term will wipe out the cash the canal generates for Panama's national coffers.

Some Panamanians still believe the United States will find a reason to renege at the last moment and keep the canal and bases. Indeed, the Panamanians still believe—mistakenly—that the United States desperately needs the bases. Both are ridiculous notions. The canal has been off the American political screen since the days in the late 1970s when Reagan liked to thunder, "We bought it, we paid for it, it's ours, and we're going to keep it." After an emotional debate, the U.S. Senate ratified the treaty by a 2-vote margin, and since then three American presidents, including Reagan himself, have stood behind it.

In its heyday, Panama was such a dream posting for Americans that the wife of a young Green Beret officer burst into tears in 1972 when her husband was reassigned from Fort Sherman to a hardship post—Hawaii. On paper, the long goodbye for America's last colony has three years left to run. But for old-timers in the zone, paradise lost began in October 1979, when the treaty went into effect. The idyllic lives of the civilians who ran the canal and the soldiers who protected it have gone steadily downhill ever since.

The 1903 treaty gave the United States sovereignty "in perpetuity" over a ten-mile-wide swath of Panama spanning the isthmus. The Canal Zone was a Little America unto itself. Crisply administered by the Panama Canal Company, a U.S. government agency, the zone was Main Street, U.S.A., circa 1930. From cradle to grave, the company handled everything. Zonians



AP/Wide World Photos

Fort Amador, on the Pacific side of the canal

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had their own commissaries, hospitals, schools, churches, service clubs, Little League, restaurants, railroad, mortuary, even their own postage stamps and federal district court. Except for speeding tickets, handed out with stern dispatch by the redneck Canal Zone police force, crime was virtually nonexistent.

"It was a paradise," sighs a third-generation Zonian, and it looked the part. The entire zone was so beautifully kept that from the American towns of Cristobal on the Atlantic to Balboa on the Pacific it resembled one enormous golf course. "A wonderful place," says Barry McCaffrey, who was literally conceived in the zone when his father, also a retired Army general, was stationed there in the 1940s. As a young captain in the late sixties, McCaffrey was the aide-de-camp to the commanding general of Army troops and lived in quarters at Fort Amador.

"I absolutely loved it," McCaffrey says of his days as a junior officer. "It was very stable and quiet. The whole place was run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers culture—no flaps, and flawless attention to detail."

In addition to returning the canal and U.S. bases to Panama by the end of the century, the 1977 treaty abolished the Canal Zone and turned over all its governmental functions to Panama. Adding insult to injury, Jimmy Carter's negotiators further agreed to abolish the Panama Canal Company and all its commercial enterprises. Predictably, the quality of life took a nose dive. The service center, a popular cafeteria where kids from Balboa Elementary and the high school hung out after classes, was taken over by the Panamanians, who jacked up the prices so high the kids stopped going. Today the restaurant sits vacant. Next door, the Balboa Theater, an art deco classic, is also a wistful memory of Saturday matinees for a quarter, just like the padlocked bowling alley across the street the Panamanians pledged to keep open.

"THIS PLACE USED TO BE HEAVEN," SAYS A HIGH-SCHOOL SENIOR AT THE BALBOA FITNESS CENTER. NOW "IT'S MORE LIKE HELL EVERY DAY."

"This place used to be heaven," says a high-school junior pumping iron at the Balboa fitness center. "It's more like hell every day. We ran this country for them, and now they've run it into the ground."

Now that they've reclaimed most of the real estate, the Panamanians have also begun renaming the streets. The Prado, the elegant palm-flanked thoroughfare leading from the steps of the canal Administration Building to Stevens Circle, the monument to the canal's second chief engineer, is now Avenida Presidente Chiara. Gaillard Highway, named for the Army engineer who supervised the hellish nine-mile cut through the shale and rock of the Continental Divide, is now the Avenida Omar Torrijos, after the military dictator who finally forced the *gringos* out. Parts of Roosevelt Avenue have become Avenida Ascano Arosemenea. The Americans have protested, to no avail.

There's also a dreadful McDonald's sign at the graceful but defunct Balboa rail station. The Panamanian lawyer who owns the restaurant promised canal officials he wouldn't put it up, then reneged. "It's a matter of business," he shrugs. "If people don't know you're there, you aren't going to sell any hamburgers." Some Americans still boycott the place in protest.

Like the grizzled Texas Ranger captain in *Lonesome Dove* who drinks a toast to "the sunny slopes of long ago," the dwindling band of Zonians mourns a way of life that was doomed long before the treaty was signed and ratified. "It was always clear to most of us," McCaffrey muses, "that you couldn't continue to have a colonial status in Panama. To this day, a lot of Panamanians feel like outsiders in their own country. It was a distortion of reality that had to end. It's time to move forward. We have to be satisfied with taking pride in what we've accomplished here."

In the spring and summer of last year, the Clinton administration quietly debated whether it made sense to reopen the issue of the U.S. military presence in Panama. Bound by treaty to leave anyway, and stretched to the limit as peacekeeping duties escalated and budgets shrank, the Army was dead-set against staying after 1999. Besides, there's no real external threat to the canal anymore; the huge coastal artillery guns at the entrances were pulled out decades ago. There's no urgent strategic reason for the U.S. military to remain either. Except for critical geopolitical hot spots like Germany, South Korea, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, Pentagon doctrine is rapidly moving away from the notion of forward basing.

"We're a force-projection army these days," says a top military planner. "If we have to deploy to Brazil, we'll do it from Bragg or Hood or Bliss [in the United States], not from Fort Clayton [in Panama]." This is all the more true since the last American combat units pulled out of Panama last year. So with no vital national-security interests left in Panama, the conventional wisdom favored the status quo.

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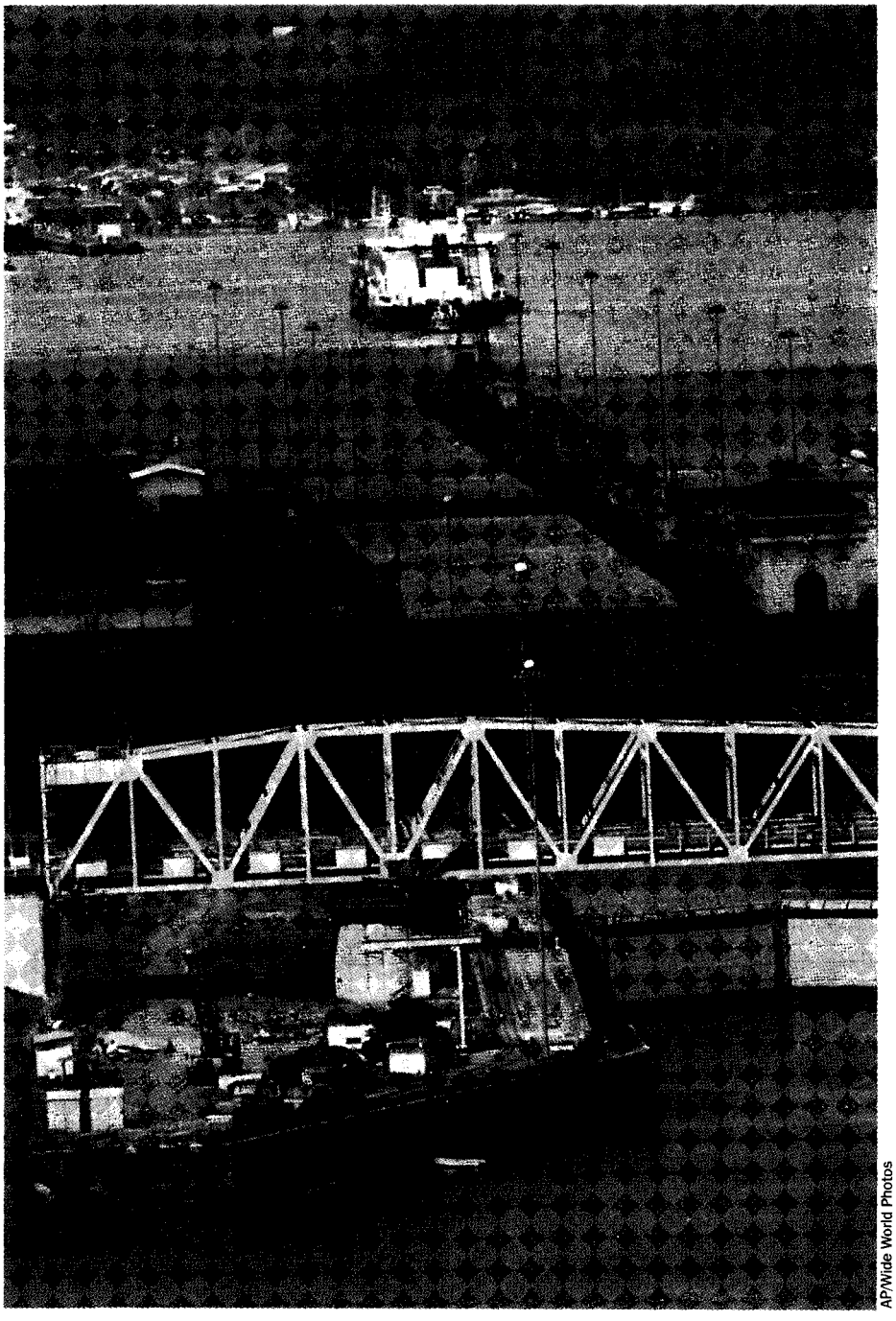
The man who persuaded the Pentagon and ultimately the president otherwise was McCaffrey. He argued that the American military presence, while not absolutely crucial to U.S. interests, would nevertheless be useful to maintain at reduced levels.

Clinton decided that the United States would be willing to keep around 4,000 troops in-country beginning in 2000 if the Panamanians were agreeable. U.S. officials, in fact, are interested in hanging on to seven of the ten installations they still own, including Howard Air Force Base, a naval station, the jungle school at Fort Sherman, military housing at Fort Clayton, and a logistics base at Corozal. For fear of spooking the Panamanians, they don't admit this publicly. Instead, they talk about the mutual benefit of the counter-drug operation run out of Howard. That's the easiest sell for keeping the United States around. Having abolished their army after Manuel Noriega was toppled by the 1989 U.S. invasion, Panamanians fear the Colombian drug cartels could quickly undermine the nation's tender democracy if the Americans ship out.



AP/Wide World Photos

Ships make their way through a lock.

In July, Perez Balladares trotted out the idea of creating a regional anti-drug center based at Howard, a sign he's trying to find a rationale to keep the Americans. But Clinton's offer presents the Panamanian government with an enormous political dilemma. Officially, the ruling Democratic Revolutionary party (PRD) wants the United States out. But many party leaders, including Perez Balladares, an American-educated banker, want to make a deal. His coalition government is fearful of the nationalists, who see the issue as a matter of simple sovereignty and enjoy political muscle out of proportion to their minority status.

The political sensitivities are so great that before Clinton and Perez Balladares met in Washington in September 1995, the Panamanians insisted on a face-saving arrangement. There was no way Perez Balladares could touch this hot potato unless Clinton raised it "spontaneously." The president obligingly

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gave his guest the requisite cover; at the end of their talks, the two leaders agreed to launch "preliminary exploratory talks" to see whether it made sense for the United States to keep some of its bases.

Since then, the negotiations have gone nowhere. Just before these talks-about-talking were to happen a year ago, the Panamanians asked for a postponement. Their fig-leaf explanation: New U.S. ambassador William Hughes wasn't up to speed on the issue. The real reason was that the Panamanians hadn't prepared their own electorate for the prospect of an extremely tricky political U-turn.

About that same time, the Panamanians began telling their American interlocutors that the only way the PRD could justify allowing the *gringos* to stay was if the United States agreed to pay rent. Even adjusting for Latin *machismo*, this demand was too much for the Clinton administration. Getting out has been U.S. national policy since 1977. But the pay-to-stay idea is an absolute deal-breaker. Panama, after all, isn't the only country whose national dignity counts for something. "They simply don't believe we're going to walk out of a country we built and not pay them rent," a senior American policy-maker says. "But we are. They still think they're in a negotiation with us. We think we're leaving—in fact, we *know* we're leaving—unless they sign a partnership with America that's beneficial to us and extremely beneficial to them."

PANAMANIAN LEADERS WANT BOTH THE NATIONALIST SATISFACTION OF WATCHING AMERICAN FORCES DEPART AND THE PROSPERITY THAT DEPENDS ON THEIR STAYING.

And anti-American politicians have recently begun to play the environmental card, charging that the United States must pay to clean up the mess it's leaving behind. It's a ludicrous argument—the American bases are pristine—but even some pro-American politicians are trumpeting it. "It's a smokescreen," one U.S. official says, "but they want billions."

At the moment, the non-negotiations are at a perilous point. The American drawdown proceeds apace and is in fact accelerating. Southcom headquarters will move to Miami next summer, a year ahead of schedule. That should have been a message that the United States really doesn't need the bases anymore, but it didn't register.

Many senior American officials believe the Panamanians don't understand that their window of opportunity is closing. At some point fairly soon, the pullout will reach the point of no return. Unless an agreement in principle is reached by early next year, the American withdrawal is probably irreversible.

The Panamanians don't believe it. Even Americans sympathetic to local political realities worry that Panama, in the time-honored tradition of *mañana*, will continue to miscalculate the degree of urgency and come on board a day late and a dollar short.

A recent poll shows that three-quarters of the Panamanian people want the United States to stay, mostly for economic reasons. Ironically, for a country whose official currency is the U.S. dollar, the nationalists seem hellbent on ignoring the value of the greenback to its struggling economy. In economic terms alone, keeping some U.S. bases is a slam-dunk proposition. The American presence pumps more than $350 million a year into the Panamanian economy, roughly 8 percent of its gross domestic product. More than 16,000 jobs depend on the Americans, including those of more than 3,000 Panamanians who work for the U.S. military. Those jobs would evaporate and aren't easily replicated in the domestic economy.

If the United States pulls out entirely, Panama's struggling treasury will have to eat the entire cost of maintaining the bases. And more to the point, the confidence of shippers who use the canal and foreign companies and governments considering an investment in Panama will be shaken. It's too distasteful for them to admit publicly, but senior Panamanian officials understand full well that a post-2000 American presence implies a political stability critical to attracting overseas capital. Perez Balladares's European trip last fall to drum up foreign investment to develop the U.S. bases was a failure. The message he came home with was this: If the United States hangs around, there's less chance of Panama succumbing to a new dictator or the drug lords.

The trouble is, Panamanian leaders want both the nationalist satisfaction of watching American forces depart and the prosperity that depends on their staying. The Panamanians will have to choose. The new Southcom commander, Army general Wesley Clark, thinks they'll opt for a continued American role. "It's hard for me to believe we cannot successfully manage this transition working together," Clark says. A better bet is that the Panamanians will send America packing, suffer more economic woes, let the canal languish and decline, and prove Ronald Reagan a prophet. ♦

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The Right's Anti-American Temptation

By David Brooks

The November issue of *First Things*, the conservative monthly, features a symposium called "The End of Democracy: The Judicial Usurpation of Politics." Its introduction, by editor in chief Richard John Neuhaus, suggests that an unrestrained judiciary is seizing control of crucial sections of American life and taking decision-making power away from the democratic process and the American people. "If so, we are witnessing the end of democracy," Neuhaus writes. Then, citing a papal encyclical on the supremacy of moral law over secular power, Neuhaus warns, "America is not and, please God, will never become Nazi Germany, but it is only blind hubris that denies it can happen and, in peculiarly American ways, may be happening here."

The symposium asks whether Americans have a duty to commit civil disobedience or even "morally justified revolution" against such a "regime." For the existing U.S. government may be not only undemocratic, but immoral. Neuhaus posits: "Law, as it is presently made by the judiciary, has declared its independence from morality." If the conflict is between loyalty to state and loyalty to God, then surely duty to God comes first. "We are prepared for the charge that publishing this symposium is irresponsibly provocative and even alarmist," his introduction declares.

Well, at least they were prepared. Although just published, the symposium has already generated anger, angst, and controversy. Peter Berger and Gertrude Himmelfarb have resigned from the magazine's editorial board, and Walter Berns has resigned from the editorial advisory board. Others have independently written letters of protest—some of them, like Norman Podhoretz's, quite heated. And it has given those of us in conservative circles something to talk about. (Members of the staff of THE WEEKLY STANDARD are intertwined with the dispute by familial bonds, professional relationships, and ties of friendship; our contributing editor J. Bottum works full-time as associate editor of *First Things*.)

The *First Things* controversy is more than just a tempest in a conservative teapot. It raises one of the more interesting questions of the moment: Is the Right about to go anti-American? Already, many conservatives are profoundly disturbed by the calm way the American public seems to have accepted Bill Clinton's character, and find themselves asking the same questions as Ross Perot: "Is there no sense of decency in this country? Is there no sense of honor? Is there no sense of shame?" Robert Bork's *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* is number two on the *New York Times* best-seller list—a book in which Bork argues that America "is on the road to cultural disaster." And now, along comes *First Things*, questioning the legitimacy of the American government itself.

Neuhaus, a Lutheran pastor turned Catholic priest who is on close terms with Pope John Paul II, has gone into all this with his eyes open. The idea for the symposium emerged after years of articles and discussions about the imperial judiciary, and following a three-hour brainstorming meeting of the *First Things* editorial board in June (Berger, Himmelfarb, and some others were not in attendance). The editors chose five authors to contribute to the discussion—Bork, Charles Colson, and the academics Russell Hittinger, Hadley Arkes, and Robert George. Peter Berger, the distinguished sociologist of religion and an old friend and collaborator of Neuhaus's, argues that the respondents are only backing up the point that the American "regime" is illegitimate. "I don't accept the idea that the issue is simply an exploration of the matter, though that's the language," Berger says. "It's not a symposium. It's a position paper with a chorus of papers to support it. . . . To explore whether the American government is legitimate is a slippery slope, and the most distasteful portion involves the mention of Nazi Germany."

Actually, none of the respondents endorses full-bore civil disobedience or declares the government illegitimate, although Colson comes close. But a tone of crisis, a sense that history itself is moving in the wrong direction, does pervade the pages. And it is a tone mainstream conservatives have not used in a long while.

The contributors are troubled by several recent court decisions. In 1992's abortion-related

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Planned Parenthood v. *Casey*, the Supreme Court adopted a preference for the radical notion of autonomous individualism: "At the heart of liberty," Justices Kennedy, Souter, and O'Connor wrote for the majority, "is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." Neuhaus argues this decision, among others, proves the judiciary has chosen to side with moral libertarianism in the culture wars and is busy imposing its will on the nation.

In 1996's *Romer* v. *Evans*, the *First Things* contributors argue, the Supreme Court looked improperly into the psyches of Colorado voters who voted to prevent localities from adopting gay-rights statutes. The court decided these Coloradans were motivated by "animus" and declared their motives unconstitutional. "In other words," Hittinger writes, "individual liberty is defined not merely by the kind of act or decision that one is free to engage in, but by immunity from a certain kind of motive or purpose on the part of the legislator."

Finally, in the 1996 euthanasia case *Compassion in Dying* v. *Washington*, Judge Stephen Reinhardt's majority decision for the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals struck another blow for the notion of the autonomous self. Reinhardt argued that people with religious convictions are not free to impose their beliefs on others. But by declaring that, Hittinger argues, the court "excludes from the political process the objects of mutual deliberation that make political order desirable, indeed even possible. Desirable, because the culture-forming institutions cannot be sustained without common effort. . . . Possible, because once private individuals are allowed rights to use lethal force for vindicating justice in their own cause (as in abortion or euthanasia), it is difficult to see how even the most rudimentary foundations of the older political society—those that reserve the use of lethal force to public authority—still remain."

Colson speculates on how religious conservatives will respond as the judiciary continues to usurp power to enforce its own "amoral libertarian regime." Either traditional theists will be forced to abandon their religious beliefs, or, more likely, they will be forced to withdraw from public life and become what theologian Stanley Hauerwas calls "resident aliens" in America—no longer "concerned about the fortunes or misfortunes of a flawed Republic, no longer considering this land their country."

Colson no longer puts much stock in the political process. He declares that the "'putative alliance' between the religious right and the Republican Party offers little solution." But he says despair is premature. The country has not reached the point at which Christians should cease to swear allegiance to the United States. But that moment may be fast approaching, and in the meantime Christians should consider all options: "The fervent and ceaseless prayer of every Christian should be that the discussion of resistance and revolution remains an academic exercise." But "we must—slowly, prayerfully, and with great deliberation and serious debate—prepare ourselves for what the future seems likely to bring under a regime in which the courts have usurped the democratic process by reckless exercise of naked power."

It's worth emphasizing here that Colson is a major figure in the evangelical movement, and those familiar with the scholarly literature generated by that movement (and by the orthodox Catholicism represented by Neuhaus, Hittinger, and George) say these sorts of questions are common. Indeed, this is just another chapter in a long-running debate in religious quarters over how to square duty to God with duty to nation.

Participants in this centuries-old discussion make a distinction that Americans are not prone to consider, one between the nation and the "regime." Americans are accustomed to thinking that ours is a government *of* the people. But the word "regime" suggests that government is something placed *over* the people, in this case by arrogant judges. It is possible, with this distinction, to admire the American people (as Neuhaus does) and still declare the government illegitimate. The distinction means that the nation is not embroiled in a culture war, but has instead been the victim of a culture coup in which secularists have simply imposed their will through the courts.

Those who object to the symposium insist that the nation is not in such desperate straits and that it is reckless and foolish to question the "regime." In her letter of resignation from the *First Things* editorial board, Gertrude Himmelfarb agrees that the judiciary has vastly exceeded its proper powers. "But I do not at all agree that this raises the specter of the illegitimacy of the government," she continues. Himmelfarb points out that Neuhaus's contribution "cites the American Revolution as if we are now in a similarly revolutionary situation—an analogy that, in my opinion (and that, I believe, of the overwhelming majority of Americans) is absurd and irresponsible." All the talk of "regime" is not proper political discourse and discredits, "or at least makes suspect, any attempt by conservatives to introduce moral and religious considerations into 'the public square'"—an effort Himmelfarb supports.

First Things is a magazine about religion and the

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public square, and Neuhaus is a leading proponent of the idea that religion must play a larger role in political life. A certain number of people who regard the symposium as alarmist or worse will say it proves how dangerous it can be to bring a religious sensibility into close contact with politics. Those who apply religious principles directly to politics, their opponents will say, measure the political realm by moral criteria that are inappropriately abstract. They consider declaring government morally illegitimate when decisions don't go their way. Thus, religion can breed apocalyptic extremism and zealous outbursts.

Berger thinks the symposium is a huge overreaction: "The first charge is that the courts have usurped power. But through American history other branches have historically usurped power. To conclude from that the system is illegitimate is absurd."

Norman Podhoretz sees it as an outburst of anti-Americanism reminiscent of the anti-Americanism found among left-wing intellectuals in the 1960s. In those days liberals were the ones who sought to declare the American "regime" illegitimate. "I am appalled," Podhoretz wrote to Neuhaus, "by the language . . . you use to describe this country, especially your own reference to Nazi Germany; by the seditious measures you contemplate and all but advocate; and by the aid and comfort you for all practical purposes offer to the bomb throwers among us." Podhoretz, like others, fears the symposium could be seen as bolstering the case of the vigilante militias and other extremists on the right.

Richard John Neuhaus

Chas Fagan

Neuhaus argues that no topic should be out of bounds for discussion and that the radical nature of the recent court crisis demands new types of thinking in response. This symposium is only the beginning of the discussion, he maintains. "Most people throughout history have lived under dubious regimes," Neuhaus says. "It may well be that the end result of this discussion will be that we will have to get used to asking how you live in an order that is morally dubious and not amenable to change. This symposium will look like the last gasp of American exceptionalism."

Modern American conservatism rose by changing its character. What had been a prosaic, incrementalist political clique became a visionary, ideological creed. So it's perhaps fitting that if conservatism rose to political power by wedding itself to abstract ideas, it should also withdraw from political power because of that tendency.

Long gone is the thing that used to be known as the Conservative Temper. This is the mood that fears change, distrusts abstract notions, reveres the here and now, and is obsessed by historical continuity. That style of conservatism was extinguished, many conservatives would say, when the unconscious assumptions upon which it was based were challenged by the 1960s. Suddenly the just prejudices that nobody had much thought about—for example, that the two-parent heterosexual family is naturally superior—were called into question. Conservatives could no longer just mutely cherish and preserve. They had to argue for propositions that had previously been unquestioned. They needed to put into words things that had been accepted as given, and they needed to apply abstract ideals to political debate. Some secular conservatives took the ideals of the free market and applied them to politics. Some religious conservatives brought their religious beliefs more closely to bear on political issues.

The new conservative style, based on conscious fealty to abstract ideals and beliefs, is not necessarily bad. But it does contain its own dangers. What happens, for example, when the nation doesn't live up to the high ideals and shows no prospect of doing so? Maybe the people themselves are corrupt. Maybe they have become morally deadened, quite untroubled by

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the fact that 1.3 million abortions are performed every year. Or maybe the people are not corrupt, but are still in the sway of a corrupt elite whose hold on the leading institutions gives it the power to determine the course of the nation. What happens, in short, when the conservative finds he loves his ideals more than his country?

The first thing that happens is that the conservative (maybe it is more accurate to call him "orthodox" because of his love of abstract ideals) starts proposing radical solutions in an effort to jerk his country back to where he thinks it should be. Radical revolution is the opposite of the original Conservative Temper. But revolutionary talk has become common in conservative circles. Robert Bork has a proposal that would radically alter the constitutional order, one that would allow the Congress to overturn by majority vote any Supreme Court decision. Other conservatives would pass a constitutional amendment doing away with judicial review.

The other thing such people do is hold debates about whether they can support their government. "Jefferson was too reckless when he said the ground of democracy needed to be watered every thirty years by the blood of revolution," Neuhaus says, "but we should raise fundamental questions and look things over from time to time." That sentiment in favor of a return to first principles is the antithesis of the Conservative Temper.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY PROUDLY CALLS ITSELF THE PARTY OF IDEAS. WELL, IDEA-DRIVEN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO FLY OFF THE HANDLE.

Religious thinkers who are active in the public square do not want to avoid debates about first things. And they *will* dwell on when the sovereignty of God demands breaking off loyalty to nation. They will cite, as the contributors to the *First Things* symposium do, the many different ways theologians have addressed this question over the centuries. They will declare, as Neuhaus does, that the phrase "God and country" should not come tripping off the tongue because the two are not necessarily linked.

If conservatives feel that they love their ideals more than their country, then you will see them withdrawing from public life, as Colson warns religious conservatives will. If they find that the revelations about Bill Clinton's character produce no response in a public too deadened to care about certain standards, then they will become more interested in preserving small communities of virtue than in influencing the entire nation. If they decide that the political elites are impervious to reason, or simply ignore reason, then they will abandon reasoned argument and simply deliver caustic commentaries on their opponents' unreason.

That is the trend *Washington Times* columnist Tod Lindberg noticed in Antonin Scalia's recent dissents. Such a conservatism won't present a very happy face to the world. It would console itself with the glories of transcendence and hope these could compensate for its abandonment of the here and now.

American conservatism is far from going down this road. Many conservatives still think history is moving in their direction. They interpret Clinton's resurgence as an odd confirmation of the conservatism of the time; he has adopted many conservative-sounding policies and is more comfortable with being religious in public than any president since Jimmy Carter. They note that while the judiciary is headed in the wrong direction on abortion and gay marriage, it has been handing down comforting judgments on school choice and the role of religion in public (and on affirmative action). They retain faith in the wisdom of the American people, in their ability to eventually correct the errors of their courts, and in the basic health of the American government.

But the *First Things* symposium, while still an outlier, may also be a harbinger. American conservatism *is* based on abstract ideals, and if there is a wave of disenchantment on the right it will take the form we see here. It will call America into question in the name of higher things.

The Republican party proudly calls itself the party of ideas. Well, Republicans had better learn to take the good with the bad. Idea-driven people are quick to abandon political parties. They have been known to fly off the handle. And intellectuals sometimes blithely engage in discussion of civil disobedience and revolution, as if talk of these horrendous subjects had no real-world consequences.

Two years ago, in the midst of the controversy over *The Bell Curve*, one writer did warn his fellows that not all subjects are fit for public discussion. "America is not an academic seminar limited to a few utterly dispassionate and socially disengaged intellectuals interested only in 'the truth'," he declared. That writer, of course, was Richard John Neuhaus. ♦

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A STUDY IN SHAME

A Reputable Journal Publishes a Fatally Flawed, Politically Correct Article About Blacks and Blood Pressure— And for Its Sins, Gets Massive Press Coverage

By Eric Felten

October 24 was one of those days when everyone in the news business seemed to have been reading the very same obscure academic journal. "Discrimination May Affect Risk of High Blood Pressure in Blacks," was the *New York Times* headline; "Study: Discrimination May Cause Hypertension in Blacks," declared the *Washington Post*. Nor were print reporters the only ones scouring the *American Journal of Public Health*, where the blood-pressure study was published; even the 11 o'clock local news nationwide was up to speed that night on the latest issue of the American Public Health Association's journal.

The reason for the avalanche of coverage is simple: A press release hyping the article was faxed around by the association's public-relations department, with an embargo that forbade any news about the article until the evening before October 24. For its efforts, the association was rewarded with news coverage that was as lavish as it was credulous. In their rush to report a juicy story about the ravages of racism, the journalists never noticed they were being had. In truth, the so-called study is such a jumbled mess of contradictory data that it couldn't possibly be evidence of anything, let alone the contentious thesis that racism literally causes illness in black people.

IF NANCY KRIEGER WERE CORRECT, THE ERADICATION OF RACISM, SEXISM, AND HOMOPHOBIA WOULD BECOME A JOB FOR PUBLIC-HEALTH AUTHORITIES.

The article, "Racial Discrimination and Blood Pressure," was written by Nancy Krieger of the Harvard School of Public Health, in an attempt to show that the well-documented prevalence of hypertension among blacks is the result of discrimination. It isn't the first such study that Krieger has done. She has tried for years to show that the Left's favorite old bogeys aren't just societal ills, but scientifically demonstrable pathogens. (Other Krieger articles: "The influence of social class, race, and gender on the etiology of hypertension among women in the United States" and "Racism, sexism, and social class: implications for studies of health, disease, and well-being.") Were she to succeed, racism, sexism, and "homophobia" would no longer be matters for law and ethics. Instead, their eradication would become a job for public-health authorities with their clipboards and white frocks. No wonder the American Public Health Association is so eager to publicize Krieger's findings.

Here's how Krieger's study worked. Blood pressure readings were taken for 831 black men and 1,143 black women between the ages of 25 and 37. The participants were asked a barrage of questions about their income, occupation, education, marital status, smoking status, and weight. To eliminate the effect of those factors known to raise blood pressure—like obesity and smoking—the results were weighted. The participants were either deemed "professional class" or "working class" based on income and occupation. Then the participants were asked whether they experienced racism in any of seven situations—"at school," "getting a job," "at work," "getting housing," "getting medical care," "on the street or in a public setting," and "from the police or in the courts." The responses allowed Krieger to put the participants in a variety of subgroups. There were, for example, working-class black men who reported no discrimination; those who reported some discrimination; and those who reported discrimination in three or more areas of life. The same breakdowns were made for working-class black women, professional-class black men, and professional-class black women.

Krieger's thesis is that the stress of experiencing racism is a cause (perhaps *the* cause) of high blood pressure among black Americans. One would think

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that to prove this, you would need to find that racism tracks with blood pressure—that is, those who reported experiencing the most racism on average would have the highest blood pressure, and vice versa. But this is not what Krieger's findings showed. For starters, professional-class blacks had significantly lower blood pressure than working-class blacks. This, even though Krieger's data (and a wealth of other surveys) show that professional-class blacks claim to encounter more racism than do their blue-collar counterparts.

Krieger isn't about to admit that the data disprove her hypothesis, however. Instead, she is ready with an "interpretation" of the results. Professional-class blacks may report more racism than working-class blacks, but according to Krieger it doesn't drive their blood pressure up as much because of "their greater social and economic resources and, thus, perhaps greater willingness to name and challenge discriminatory treatment."

KRIEGER HAS MADE THE CONVENIENT ASSUMPTION THAT WORKING-CLASS MEN LIE TO THEMSELVES ABOUT RACISM BUT THAT PROFESSIONAL MEN DO NOT.

Krieger's interpretation goes into overdrive when she grapples with the results involving working-class black men. Yes, the average blood pressure of those who report multiple instances of racism was higher than that of those who said they ran into discrimination in just a couple of areas of life. But the highest average blood pressure was among those working-class black men who reported suffering *no discrimination at all*. This ought to be devastating to the Krieger hypothesis, but she has an excuse at the ready: "Individuals who have experienced but feel unable to challenge discrimination may find it painful to admit that they have experienced discrimination, either to themselves or another person."

In other words, those who say they have experienced discrimination are telling the truth; those who say they haven't experienced discrimination are suffering a particularly debilitating form of denial known as "internalized oppression."

To support this rather extraordinary (and extraordinarily convenient) interpretation of the data, Krieger did not attempt to construct an experiment to test whether the study participants were in denial. She merely cited one of her previous articles, as well as three non-scientific texts (*Living with Racism*, *Understanding Everyday Racism*, and *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*). For further evidence that suppressed anger is the key to understanding her contradictory data, Krieger also cites an article from the journal *Health Psychology* titled "Relationship of Racial Stressors to Blood Pressure Responses and Anger Expression in Black College Students." Sounds impressive. But it turns out the article was a master's thesis project with a total study sample of 12 black male students and 15 black female students at St. Louis University.

With her talent for creative interpretation, Krieger also manages to dispose of a variety of other results that confound her theory. For example, professional-class black men who said they had suffered no discrimination had lower blood pressure than those professional-class black men who said they had been victims of it. How does this fit with Krieger's claim that those who admit no discrimination are suffering from denial? It fits perfectly well once Krieger has made yet another convenient assumption: Because of their greater resources, professional-class black men do not lie to themselves about racism, but instead confront it when it happens. They can thus be trusted to report their experiences accurately, whereas working-class black men cannot.

Or how about this anomaly? Working-class black women who accept discrimination and keep it to themselves have higher blood pressure than those who talk about it, but working-class black men who talk about it have higher blood pressure than those who are silent. Doesn't that throw a wrench into the crucial interpretive machinery of "internalization"? Not for Krieger. "These patterns may reflect gender differences in how working-class black women and men respond to and talk about discrimination," she writes.

It is impossible to read "Racial Discrimination and Blood Pressure" without coming to the nagging conclusion that there is not a single result Krieger couldn't have massaged into some sort of contorted proof of her thesis. Imagine that working-class black men reporting no discrimination had reported the lowest blood pressure, and that those claiming the most encounters with racism had reported the highest. Can there be any doubt that Krieger would have discovered a causal link between racism and hypertension? And yet when the data show the reverse, Krieger claims that that too is proof of her theory.

This is not science; it is propaganda. The experimental method—the touchstone of science—requires that a hypothesis be put to a test in which it could be disproved. An experiment in which any and every

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result proves the hypothesis is by definition not a scientific experiment. Krieger did not allow her findings to refute her politically charged medical claim. Compounding the error, the American Public Health Association not only failed to call her on it, but did everything it could to publicize and hype her sciolistic claims.

Even if the data had all lined up in a nice orderly fashion, one couldn't possibly have concluded that racial discrimination is the "stressor" causing hypertension among black Americans. The problem with any research into psychosomatic illness is the near impossibility of nailing down causal relationships between the psyche and the body. For example, *Black Americans' Views of Racial Inequality: The Dream Deferred*—a text cited by Krieger as authoritative—notes that there is a relationship between the financial straits blacks find themselves in and their perception of racism. "There is a wide perceptual gap between blacks who have difficulty meeting their monthly household expenses and those who do not," according to that study, published in 1986. "Those who say it is 'very difficult' to pay their bills perceive markedly greater discrimination against themselves and against blacks in general than do those who find it 'not difficult at all.'"

Not being able to pay one's bills is just the sort of stressful situation that might drive up blood pressure. Thus, even if there were a link between reports of discrimination and hypertension, the link could be that the stresses of living near poverty are responsible both for driving up blood pressure and for causing people to perceive themselves as the victims of racism. This would be a radically different conclusion from the one Krieger draws, but just as plausible.

Similarly, there is ample research documenting that hostility and lack of trust can contribute to heart disease. What if heightened blood pressure were the product of the same hostility that encourages someone to perceive ubiquitous racism?

The Krieger study and the breathless response to it suggest that the academy seems to have lost any ability to challenge bogus research having a political cast—as long as that political cast is favorable to enlightened liberal views. We can always expect reporters from the *New York Times* and the nightly news to be suckers for "provocative" scientific findings. But once upon a time we might have expected more diligence from universities and scholarly publications. Does Krieger's research meet the standards of Harvard's School of Public Health? The answer is obviously yes. Was the *American Journal of Public Health* so eager for publicity that its editors missed the glaring faults of Krieger's research? Or did they just hype her "findings" fully aware that the study was science in its trappings only? Either way, their behavior is disgraceful. ♦

The Breaking of the "Women's Pact"

By F. Carolyn Graglia

In 1941, when I was in the seventh grade, I elected the academic instead of a vocational program at my junior high school. I lived with my divorced mother, a secretary and the family's only high school graduate. My teacher asked what I wanted to be; "a lawyer," I said, and I said it with fear. My fear stemmed not from the fact that I was a girl—in the Irish working class of my origins, being female meant you were more likely to possess the lawyerly qualities of sobriety, competence, and reliability. No, I feared rising above my station, above my class, and to my relief, my teacher only said I must work hard for scholarship money. From that day until I left my law firm in 1959 to raise a family, my aspirations were never questioned—not by the teachers and counselors who helped me obtain scholarships, nor by the employers and colleagues who always supported my career. I was a woman, and I was a lawyer, and there was an end of it.

The only disdain I have ever experienced, in fact,

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has come from contemporary feminists who have spent three decades or more waging war against the choice I made along with countless millions of my contemporaries and our younger sisters—the choice to be a homemaking wife in a traditional marriage with a breadwinning husband. The feminist goal has been to drive homemakers into the work force to work as hard as men and thus gain equal political and economic power within an increasingly androgynous society. Indeed, every action of contemporary feminism has served this goal, which is why feminists have ardently supported the modern sexual libertinism that has encouraged women to mimic male sexual patterns.

Our no-fault divorce regime that enables men to abandon and impoverish families is the most profound and enduring legacy of feminism. It may seem ironic that through its divorce policy a *women's* movement disadvantaged housewives and promoted the interests of their husbands. But it is consistent, for by subverting housewives' social and economic security, no-fault institutionalized within our society feminism's diktat that women abandon homemaking for market production. Feminist divorce policy, Betty Friedan once explained, purposely deprived women of alimony to force them to assume "equality of responsibility." A woman caring for home and child, feminists were certain, does *not* assume equal responsibility, and no-fault warns her "that instead of expecting to be supported, a woman is now expected to become self-sufficient." Thus, as Mary Ann Glendon notes, do our divorce laws tell mothers it is unsafe to devote oneself to raising children.

HELEN GURLEY BROWN EXTOLLED THE CAREER WOMAN OVER THE HOUSEWIFE, WHOM SHE CALLED A "PARASITE," A "SPONGER," AND A "BUM."

It requires little foresight to know that a housewife is enormously disadvantaged on reentering the job market. Yet Friedan pleaded that the movement was somehow "trapped" into opposing alimony—an excuse typifying the movement's reluctance to assume responsibility for its actions, as if surprised that society had taken it seriously.

The declaration of war against homemakers represented by no-fault divorce has had precisely the outcome feminists sought. It compels women to distrust their husbands and fear leaving the work force—by nullifying their bargain with husbands and society when wives stayed home to raise families, no-fault converted marriage into a relationship virtually unilaterally revocable at will, thereby destroying the viability of marriage as a woman's career.

Feminism's most effective weapon was to marginalize housewives by degrading their role. Friedan described the housewife in *The Feminine Mystique* as a "parasite" who lives without using adult capabilities or intelligence and lacks a real function when devoting herself to children, husband, and home. Decrying the housewife's life as a "waste of a human self," Friedan likened her and her fellow matrons to "male patients with portions of their brain shot away and schizophrenics." Housewives are "less than fully human," she said, for they "have never known a commitment to an idea," "risked an exploration of the unknown," or "attempted . . . creativity." That this could be said of women, who literally create life within their wombs, indicates the degree to which feminism has sought to denature women, to reshape them in man's image.

The stereotype of the housewife's inferiority set forth in *The Feminine Mystique* became a cultural truth. In 1965, *Cosmopolitan*'s Helen Gurley Brown extolled the career woman's superiority over the housewife, whom she called "a parasite, a dependent, a scrounger, a sponger, [and] a bum." Featured in *Time* magazine in 1970 was Gloria Steinem's famous essay describing traditional women as "inferiors," "dependent creatures who are still children" and, yes, again, "parasites." Those who would dismiss such statements as excesses of trash journalism should know that feminist academics equally disdained traditional women. Sociologist Jessie Bernard agreed in 1972 that the "housewife is a nobody"; "a woman," she said, "must be slightly ill mentally" to be happy in her "parasitism" of traditional marriage. Carolyn Heilbrun asserts that the housewife lacks "selfhood" because she fails to act "in the public domain" and exists, instead, as a "female impersonator," simply "fulfilling the needs of others."

With these assaults, feminists broke what I call the "Women's Pact," which existed long before feminism's advent and, if the feminist regime is ever ended, will have to reassert itself in the future. The Women's Pact recognized that women generally fell into three groups. Those in the first are unable or unwilling to marry, or are profoundly afraid of childbirth, and will devote their lives to a career (many of them once entered religious orders). Women in the second group will marry and often bear children but—

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like the aristocracy or entertainment elite—will leave child-rearing largely to others and pursue careers or other interests. Women in the third group will choose marriage as their primary career, devoting themselves mainly to husband, children, and domesticity.

Part of women's cultural knowledge was the pact between these groups that they would let one another live peacefully and not attack one another's integrity in following their chosen path. It suited homemakers that the first group did not compete much for men. Homemakers may have considered the lives of these unmarried and childless women empty, just as they may have felt that the second group were neglectful wives and mothers, but they usually refrained from saying so, lest they break the pact. In turn, the first and second groups may have thought themselves intellectually and culturally superior to homemakers, but—keeping faith with the pact—usually avoided stating this view and went quietly down their chosen paths.

While sometimes strained, the pact had never been shattered as it was by contemporary feminists. Women care very much what other women think; *their* opinions greatly affect a woman's confidence as to what she should expect from men and from herself. The pact is necessary and its shattering was so significant precisely because women seek approval from each other.

SOME OF US WERE HAPPY IN OUR MARRIAGES. WE WERE HAPPY COOKING BREAKFAST FOR OUR HUSBANDS AND CHILDREN IN THE SUBURBAN MORNING.

Thus, when feminists broke the pact in the 1960s by loudly proclaiming their disdain of domesticity and contempt for housewives, women at home faced—and many found intolerable—isolation from female approbation. We could opt for approval by abandoning home for workplace, or oppose feminist ideology and defend our choice by depicting a starkly different vision of woman's happiness and fulfillment. Either way, the women's pact was shattered.

The great irony of the offensive against homemakers is that feminists piggybacked on the civil-rights movement to obtain preferential treatment, while using the strategies of stereotype, bigotry, and contempt for an entire group to degrade the housewife's status. One need only substitute "black," "Jew," or "Hispanic" for "housewife" to know that feminists would never describe any other group—except possibly the very religious—with the degrading terms they routinely applied to us. It was human beings they derided. Some of us were very happy in our marriages. We were happy cooking breakfast for our husbands and children in the suburban morning; we were happy taking our children to the park, sitting on the benches with each other, watching our children play, and pushing them on the swings.

Why did feminists believe we deserved such calumny? Why did women choose to treat other women in this fashion? Friedan candidly told us back at the beginning, in 1963. She wrote before the civil-rights movement developed affirmative action law on which feminists later relied to allege that women, like blacks, had been discriminated against. Since no strategy yet dictated a claim of discrimination, Friedan openly acknowledged that well-educated women were eschewing careers and devoting ourselves to families simply because we wanted to. Rereading Friedan's book today, one is struck by her refreshing honesty in describing the opportunities we were blithely forgoing. "Despite the opportunities open to all women now," she laments, even the most able "showed no signs of wanting to be anything more than . . . housewives and mothers." Why, in 1963, do not more women pursue careers, now that "all professions are finally open to women" after the "removal of all the legal, political, economic, and educational barriers"?

Far from claiming discrimination kept women out of the workplace, Friedan blamed the housewife's belief that "she is indispensable and that no one else can take over her job"; she has "little, if any, desire for a position outside the home, and if she has one it is through . . . necessity." The precise purpose of Friedan's endeavor was to destroy the housewife's confidence that she *was* engaged in an important activity for which she was uniquely qualified. Contemporary feminism's effort to re-educate housewives by disabusing them of this quaint notion pitted the most educated, sophisticated, wealthy, aggressive, and masculine portion of the female population against women who generally possessed less education, wealth, and worldly experience, who were more likely to be docile than aggressive, feminine than masculine.

Feminists told these women basically to "be a man." To prove their equality, women should be sexually available on male terms without commitment. They should leave their children in surrogates' care to go work at so-called meaningful jobs so that someday, if they tried very hard—and perhaps took enough Prozac—they might possibly be as good as a man. This feminist message came right out of *Playboy*: Easy

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sex for men without marriage; for married men, working wives to help support the family; socially acceptable abortion to eliminate inconvenient children; and devaluation of child-nurturing so that wives would always work and never become dependent upon husbands.

In the struggle between masculine work-oriented values and feminine domestic values, the feminine lost. Proclaiming only market employment worthwhile, feminists targeted the traditional family as the source of women's oppression and demanded its destruction. The workplace became, in large part, a substitute for family, preempting the bulk of a woman's attention, as she relinquished her child-nurturing role and her home as the primary locus of child-rearing.

But why did feminists think it necessary that housewives join them in the workplace? Why did they not just go to work individually, as women had always done—as I set out to do in 1941 and accomplished in 1954? By recruiting other women, feminists did gain political clout to secure preferential treatment and did insulate themselves from the competition with males that some women fear. But most important, as Jane Mansbridge has made clear, the movement felt it had to discourage homemaking because if even 10 percent of women stayed home, this would encourage others to join them, putting working women "at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis men, particularly men whose wives do all the homemaking and child care."

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR ARGUED THAT IF SOME WOMEN WERE ALLOWED TO STAY HOME, IT WOULD BE "EXTREMELY DEMORALIZING" FOR WORKING WOMEN.

This perception was accurate. Housewives *do* believe we contribute to our husbands' work performance. Our belief was recently confirmed by studies of managerial and professional men showing that traditional fathers received 20 percent higher raises than men with working wives, and "those whose wives were at home . . . earned 25 percent more than those whose wives held jobs of their own." The working woman's lament that what she needs is a good wife reflects this same perception.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir identified another danger posed by women at home. It is "extremely demoralizing" for the working woman to see "other women of like social status" come to have very different fortunes "through man's mediation." The example set by women at home saps a working woman's ambition, she said, for a "comfortably married or supported friend is a temptation in the way of one who is intending to make her own success."

Thus with complete candor, de Beauvoir told us why the threat must be neutralized by depicting this tempting, comfortably married woman as "clinging" and a "dead weight," living like (here it comes again) "a parasite sucking out the living strength of another organism." De Beauvoir later boldly argued that society must prevent women from being homemakers: "No woman should be authorized to stay at home to raise her children. . . . Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one."

Heeding de Beauvoir's directive, feminists discourage the domestic choice by supporting child-care subsidies. *All* families with children would benefit from family allowances or an increased federal income tax dependent exemption; if adjusted for inflation and real growth in income since 1948, this exemption would now be close to $9,000 for each dependent, instead of $2,500. But feminists instead seek subsidized institutional child care that disfavors families where the mother remains at home by taxing and otherwise economically burdening them to pay for child care and other benefits for working women.

The feminist diktat denies the happiness of a domestic arena to women who believe that striving in the workplace is less agreeable than concentrating on husband, children, and home. To us, all market work is fungible; others can do it equally well. What we do at home with our child is unique. We do not want our unique relationship replaced by the substitute mothering of a nanny or a day-care worker. We believe that our child's well-being depends on responsiveness to need as undivided as possible and on continuing, loving interaction with one to whom *this* child is incomparably precious.

For women like us, moreover, life at home seems a gift of virtually unlimited freedom to create a design for living for ourselves and our families and to direct its performance. As G.K. Chesterton said, the housewife "is at the head of something with which she can do as she likes; the average man has to obey orders and do nothing else."

According to societal consensus, however, my choice can only be judged a "sacrifice." Even some who support the choice for children's sake consider it a

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sacrifice. Sociologist David Popenoe recently attacked "parental androgyny"—the view that men can and should serve as primary caretakers of young children—and he also deplored "limited infant-parent contacts and non-parental childrearing." But he asserts, nonetheless, the undesirability of returning to the 1950s traditional family.

Feminists have convinced society that domestic activities, once thought valuable, are in fact worthless, degrading, and incapable of satisfying anyone with a brain in her head. Feminists have thus weakened society by curtailing a female activity that substantially contributes to societal health and stability, and they have injured those women who could find motherhood, unencumbered by market employment, to be an incomparable joy. Admittedly, life at home with their children cannot be a joy—incomparable or ordinary—for women who think this life is a sacrifice, and childrearing simply a burden. My own experience has taught me that a woman's response to motherhood springs from physical and emotional reactions, as the experiences within her marriage awaken and then mold the dimensions of this response. Because there are some women whose response does make full-time child-rearing enjoyable and rewarding, we should support their lives at home and restore the level playing field feminism destroyed.

SOCIETY SHOULD NOT REBUKE WOMEN WHO REFUSE TO COMPROMISE THEIR ARTISTRY OF MOTHERHOOD AND DOMESTICITY.

But feminists will resist, as does Karen DeCrow, when recently arguing: "No man should allow himself to support his wife—no matter how much she favors the idea, no matter how many centuries this domestic pattern has existed, no matter how logical the economics of the arrangement may appear, no matter how good it makes him feel. . . . Love can flourish between adults only when everyone pays his or her own way."

This is the entire corpus of feminist dogma. The dogma demands that husband and wife discard the different, complementary roles most likely to produce stable marriages.

The most significant barrier strung around a woman's marketplace goal has always been and will remain her own unwillingness to constrict her maternal and domestic roles. But feminists would force this constriction upon us all. In declining to combine the roles, I concluded that continued career success would require me to hold a substantial part of myself aloof from my husband and children: the invisible "wedge-shaped core of darkness" that Virginia Woolf described as being oneself would have to be too large. I feared being consumed by my career and that, thus desiccated, too little of me would remain for my roles as wife and mother.

Virginia Woolf never compromised her market achievements with motherhood; nor did Emily Brontë, Jane Austen, or George Eliot. Nor did Helen Frankenthaler, who, when she was the most prominent living female artist, said: "We all make different compromises. And, no, I don't regret not having children. Given my painting, children could have suffered. A mother must make her children come first: young children are helpless. Well, paintings are objects but they're also helpless." I agree with her; that is precisely how I felt about the briefs I wrote for clients. Those briefs were like helpless children; in writing them, I first learned the meaning of complete devotion. I stopped writing them because I believed they would have been masters too jealous of my husband and my children.

Society never rebuked these women for refusing to compromise their literary and artistic achievements. Neither should it rebuke other women for refusing to compromise their own artistry of motherhood and domesticity. Not all working mothers now making these compromises celebrate their situation as the social advance it is to feminists. Many express strong yearnings to be home with their children and guilt over their choices. If these maternal yearnings are to influence behavior, they must be powerful enough to overcome the feminist triumph that has entrenched in our society the views of Karen DeCrow.

A defender of the anti-feminist perspective against these opinion-makers is like a heretic fighting a regnant Inquisition. To become a homemaker now, a woman may well need the courage of a heretic. The reality I depict rings true enough that women can and do find that courage—the courage to reject the idea that the housewife is a pariah and accept the unfashionable notion that society should respect and support the woman at home.

This is not to suggest that society interfere with a woman's decision to follow the feminist script. But neither should we continue to validate destruction of the Women's Pact by those who sought to make us all follow their script. We must now begin to dismantle the regime that puts at profound disadvantage the traditional woman who seeks a very different delight and contentment. ♦

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PANTING AFTER YOUTH

By Edwin Diamond, Catherine Donaldson-Evans, and Leah Ginsberg

"Do you think Americans are ignorant and apathetic about the election?" asks the pollster. "I don't know, and I don't care," answers the citizen, slamming the door.

Old joke, new reality. The electorate lost interest in the 1996 campaign early on. Convention ratings were down 40 percent. In 1992, 90 million-plus viewers managed to dial in to the televised presidential and vice-presidential debates; this year, the figures were in the range of 60 to 70 million.

In the annals of apathy, however, the hotly desired "youth vote" deserves special recognition. When the campaign year began, both Democratic and Republican party operatives were mildly optimistic about the Election Day turnout from the "Generation X" cohort, even though voting is strongly correlated with age—the older the voter, the more likely a trip to the polls. Still, the sheer raw "youth numbers" were alluring; the 60 million Americans between 18 and 34 represent almost one in every four potential voters. Moreover, four out of five of these young people identified themselves as "independents," which means they're up for grabs every election cycle.

Well, grab this. At the beginning of the campaign year, an organization called Rock the Vote worked alongside the MTV network to get young Americans to register (see "Rock the Leftist Vote," THE WEEKLY STANDARD, July 29, 1996). While Rock the Vote radio and TV spots urged listeners to register and vote, a sleek MTV bus toured college campuses and suburban malls, blasting out rock numbers, distributing registration forms, telling crowds to "Choose or Lose." In 1992, a first-time, largely larky effort by Rock the Vote signed up some 350,000 new voters. This year, the volume was pumped up higher. MTV and Rock the Vote boasted strong brand-name recognition. Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich gave interviews to MTV political reporter Tabitha Soren; Sheryl Crow and Robin Williams enlisted in the Rock the Vote ad campaign. The Choose or Lose bus was a cool statement in itself: interiors by Todd Oldham, images and sounds on the multiple video monitors and oversized speakers courtesy of Hootie and the Blowfish, Primitive Radio Gods, and Metallica.

ONCE AGAIN, THE GROWNUPS HAVE FOOLED THEMSELVES INTO THINKING THAT AMONG THE YOUNG, A NAKED GENERATION-ISM HOLDS SWAY.

Yet the number of newly registered "youth voters" is not much higher than in 1992, despite a larger potential pool—some 3 million Americans have turned 18 each year in the mid-1990s—and the ease of registration under the new motor-voter law.

Once again, presumed grownups lost it—nonsensically thinking that any group as large and amorphous as Americans between the ages of 18 and 34 could have common political interests, even with the mediagenic "Gen X" designation. Rock the Vote directed its TV appeals not so much to young people's idealistic hopes as to a kind of naked generation-ism. "You don't let other people choose your music," went the rant on the emblematic Rock the Vote spot, "why let them choose your future?" Talk about reductive arguments: After all those years of Dad telling you to turn down the stereo, now you can fight back.

In fact, the actual lives and voting records of young Americans explode the pop image of rebellious youth in ripped jeans and turned-backward baseball caps. The kids in the caps are more likely to be 15. By 20 they're shopping at J. Crew or Express. By 30, they've got 401(k) plans—58 percent of them in one (admittedly) upper-end group sampled last year by Roper Starch Worldwide. While the performers on MTV's videos party on, the network's sales department quietly hustles new advertising business with demographic charts claiming that almost half of the audience is in pajamas by 11, rises early, and earns $40,000 per.

Unsurprisingly, those young voters who responded at all to campaign appeals leaned toward such middle-class issues as jobs, crime, and the cost of education. In other words, "youth" has tended to vote a lot like older Americans. In the 1980s, among the strongest supporters of Ronald Reagan and George Bush were younger voters (when they managed to show up at the polls). In 1992, with Gen X turnout slightly higher—43 per-

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cent of registered 18 to 34-year-olds voted, compared with around 40 percent in Reagan's two election campaigns—the "youth vote" tilted toward Clinton (Cool Bill, in shades, playing his sax on Arsenio Hall's show).

For both the Republicans and Democrats, the 1996 youth drive was a lot like their "adult" campaign efforts: in the case of the GOP, ill-conceived when not inept; for the Democrats, a conscious diminuendo (don't rock *anything* this year). The Rock the Vote registration party at the University of San Diego after the last Clinton-Dole debate underlined the ambivalence of the two parties about being too closely identified with the network of *Beavis and Butt-Head*. Clinton skipped the fun, sending instead the Peter Pan-like George Stephanopoulos. Bob and Elizabeth Dole showed up with . . . Gerald Ford, now 83.

The obsession with the youth vote finds a parallel in the obsession of TV executives with viewers who are 18 to 34 years old. Well before the 1996 campaign began, a number of news organizations independently came to the conclusion that they had to do something extra to entice young Americans into the media tent. ABC News hired 29-year-old Anderson Cooper as a correspondent with what he calls a "mandate" to tell stories other reporters weren't telling, focusing on voices not usually heard, all in a style not usually seen. Cooper says he doesn't want to be known only as "the Generation X reporter." "That seems really cheesy to me," Cooper says. "I don't know any difference between telling a story to a young person and telling a story to an older person."

Oh? But during the campaign ABC sent Cooper around the country to do a five-part series, "Across a Generation," about American twentysomethings who "face a future of uncertainty about identity, work, personal and political commitment." Cooper used a Hi-8 camera "to achieve a more intimate feel" in the interviews, then edited the film with MTV-style jump cuts and sharp angles, "like an old family movie." The visual result is nothing if not arresting, but the overall meaning is a bit harder to read. The series leads off with Mollie, 24. Mollie wants to teach elementary school, but, Cooper's voice-over explains, she's still looking after two years. Her father, a math teacher, graduated from college in 1966 and had three job offers. "Like many of her generation," Cooper reports, "she's a college graduate, unemployed, and disillusioned."

The home-movie feel and the artful lighting create a wave of empathy for Mollie, and then the viewer's disillusion sets in. We're thinking how tough it is for Gen Xers until another Cooper voice-over informs us that, while "in many cities there's a shortage of teachers, Mollie wants a suburban school." Ohhh . . .

The most direct Gen X push was mounted at CNN. At the start of the campaign season, the cable network brought in Vassar grad and former *New York Post* reporter Jonathan Karl, 28, to be a political correspondent "specializing in covering the issues and concerns of

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Generation X," in the words of the CNN press release. CNN also signed up Kellyanne Fitzpatrick, 29, and Farai Chideya, 28, to offer commentary on CNN's "Inside Politics" program. Fitzpatrick is a Republican pollster; Chideya, formerly at *Newsweek*, was hired by *Time* last month. In the editor's note announcing her appointment, Chideya said she hates the Gen X label but is resigned to using it "with a smirk in my voice."

Chideya's first piece in *Time* tried to explain her generation's apparent lack of interest in politics and current events. While Chideya herself cited Pew Research Center figures showing how network news viewing has declined by almost one-third among 18 to 29-year-olds in the past year alone, she still found some good tidings hidden in the numbers. Yes, only one in five Gen Xers may watch Dan or Tom or Peter, but they nevertheless glom on to "news" about politics from Letterman, Leno, and other late-night TV sages. "Don't assume just because someone doesn't know who Boutros Boutros-Ghali is, that he or she is stupid," Chideya says in an interview. "Young people have knowledge"; it just may be "a different base of knowledge."

Chideya argues that the typical news story leaves out the under-30-year-olds: "If it's an education piece, teachers are interviewed, administrators are interviewed. Students have to be interviewed, too." In a health-care piece, the younger uninsured audience ought to be covered. News stories on television can be shot to attract younger viewers—in a style that "looks and feels funkier"—without cutting back on substance. The real downer is to be boring.

On CNN, a Jonathan Karl report is likely to look like any other hard-news segment: establishing shot, background interviews, closer. At the end of a piece on the voting habits of twentysomething Seattle men and women, Karl did his stand-up with the Space Needle in the background; he wore a turtleneck rather than a tie. The report was substantive, informed, intelligent. "I think the worst way to try to appeal to a young audience is to say, 'Okay, this is your Gen X minute of the week,'" Karl avers.

The ambivalence about "what youth wants" is bound to continue as long as clueless news chieftains—and out-of-it politicians, for that matter—think that the easiest way to appeal to young Americans is through tokenism and the dumbing down and tarting up of political coverage. As long as that lugubrious beat goes on, both the young *and* the old will tune out. ♦

Ideas

Liberal Bookstores, Conservative Books

By Ari Redbord

Jennifer Riest of Regnery Publishing was surprised, to say the least, when she spoke this summer to a distressed shopper from Norman, Okla. Why, the customer asked, had Regnery "given in to White House pressure" and stopped the presses on *Unlimited Access*, Gary Aldrich's account of working as an FBI agent inside the Clinton White House?

The book is the bestselling title in the firm's history, and it was printing copies as quickly as it could. Where, Riest asked, had the gentleman from Norman gotten that idea? From a store clerk, he explained, who told him that Regnery had given up on the Aldrich book because it was "a pack of lies." Riest's colleague, Ileana Gonzalez, said she received at least a call a day from customers distraught that the "White House had forced the publisher to stop shipment" of *Unlimited Access*. One customer called the publisher when a store clerk tried to talk her into buying Bob Woodward's *The Choice* rather than the Aldrich title. "It takes a lot for a person to go through the trouble of calling a publisher," Gonzalez said. So why are they calling? "It is often very hard to get ahold of this book."

Tales of bookstore-clerk sabotage in the age of conservative best-sellerdom are becoming legendary. Regnery, Free Press, and other publishers are collecting stories—some true, some undoubtedly apocryphal—about the games clerks play at Barnes & Nobles and Borders Books, not to mention at independent bookstores nationwide, whose owners are predominantly liberal.

"*Unlimited Access* is our number one book," Linda Caine of Waldenbooks explained in an interview during the summer. "We can't keep it in the store. We had an uninformed bookseller. It was an isolated incident."

Was it? Charles Murray, co-author of the controversial *Bell Curve*, discovered that clerks were literally hiding his book, either placing it out of the line of sight or "on the bottom shelf, not displayed where it would be easy to see. It certainly wasn't in the most accessible place in the store."

Ari Redbord is a senior at Duke University.

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"There is a real reluctance to stock conservative books," says Adam Bellow, editor of the Free Press. "The attitude is, 'We don't want this kind of clientele.' Many liberal independent owners simply cannot comprehend why anyone would publish a book like *The Bell Curve*, let alone read it."

This seems to be the attitude at the Haverford Bookstore in Haverford, Pa., whose manager, Julie Summerfield, explained to *Publisher's Weekly*, "There are a lot of books I would just love not to carry." I found the most prominent conservative titles are conspicuously missing from her shelves: *Unlimited Access* ("I don't keep up with the bestseller list," she told me), *The Real Anita Hill* ("I couldn't get a Macmillan rep, but I'm not sure I would have ordered it anyway"), and Rush Limbaugh's books ("I really don't feel like using my feature space for him when I can feature, for example, *What Black People Should Do Now* by Ralph Wiley") all were nowhere to be found.

Summerfield works at an independent bookstore, one of the small businesses that are quickly becoming among the most romanticized places in America. According to conventional wisdom and the lamentations of Alexander Cockburn in the *Phoenix Gazette*, independents are the the salt of the earth: "Just as healthy produce comes out of farmers' markets," writes Cockburn, "healthy literary culture flourishes in the independents." And a certain spirit of suppression as well: Prominently displayed in the window of a small independent bookseller in Buffalo sat David Brock's bestselling *The Real Anita Hill*. Next to it was a sign that read "DON'T BUY THIS BOOK!" which in turn was next to a negative review.

Independents, as Carla Cohen of Washington, D.C.'s Politics & Prose, explains, "make editorial decisions based on what our customers are interested in and our own tastes." Yet, as Adam Bellow says, it is often hard for activist owners to separate the politics from the prose: "What we see in these gestures of self-righteous censorship is actually politics masquerading as taste."

John Ekizian, publicity director of the Free Press, says that independent booksellers and even larger stores often attempt to "speak for their customers, but don't really know them." The situation, says Ekizian, is much like that of a baker who refuses to sell rye bread because he doesn't like it. The independent bookstores have "gone from wouldn't to couldn't." They are "bad business people," he says, who "base their decisions on politics."

IN THE AGE OF CONSERVATIVE BESTSELLERDOM, TALES OF BOOKSTORE-CLERK SABOTAGE ARE BECOMING LEGENDARY. A SPIRIT OF SUPPRESSION FLOURISHES.

One independent bookstore, which recently closed, is the subject of more anti-conservative lore than any other: Shakespeare & Co., on New York's Upper West Side. When Brock's book on Anita Hill stood at number three on the *New York Times* bestseller list, Shakespeare and Co. would not put it on display, keeping it discreetly on the shelves. "Every publisher wants their book displayed," said the store's owner, Bill Kurland. "We didn't display it. We may not agree with a book's importance. There was just not a large enough market for it." No market? When the book was the third bestselling non-fiction title in the United States?

When *The Real Anita Hill* was at number three, Rush Limbaugh's *The Way Things Ought to Be* was at number two. The Limbaugh book ran into many of the same problems Brock's did. Ray Hinst, co-owner of Haslam's Books in St. Petersburg, Fla., has heard an array of "complaints that the staff in certain bookstores wouldn't tell people where [*The Way Things Ought to Be*] was in the store even when they carried it." Kit Carson, who works for Limbaugh, has heard that store clerks heckled customers, turned covers inside out, and even misfiled the book in the fiction, cooking, or gardening section.

When Richard Nixon's *Memoirs* was released five years ago, Sidney Kramer, co-owner of The Remarkable Bookshop in Westport, Conn., refused to carry it. "We thought Nixon was a rascal and didn't deserve to have our efforts help him sell books," he said at the time. Kramer continues to contend, as many independent owners do, that their buying decisions do not constitute censorship; they are the owners of private businesses and can do what they like. Nat Hentoff, a noted civil libertarian and columnist for the *Village Voice*, disagrees. "I've never met anyone who will admit to being a censor," he says, "but that's what they're doing. Some of these book people profess to be all for the First Amendment. And it's utterly hypocritical."

Len Vlahos of the American Booksellers Association defends the right of small owners to stock their own shelves as they see fit. What about the censorship idea? The fact that bookstore owners make choices about what to order based on their own sensibilities is, he says, "not a criticism . . . but a strength." Perhaps Vlahos hasn't read a poster put out by his own American Booksellers Association.

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The poster declares: "The shelves of this bookstore hold a wide array of titles containing ideas as diverse as the world in which they live. We sincerely believe that it is in the best interests of our democratic society for ideas of all kinds to be available to interested individuals, regardless of what our own tastes may be." ♦

Ideas

One Writer's Battles

By Neomi Rao

Thomas Sowell, syndicated columnist and fount of books, has written another one: *Migrations and Cultures*, his thirty-first. It is the first volume of a planned trilogy on the subject of race and the movement of peoples. For at least twenty-five years, Sowell has been one of the foremost controversialists in America, and he shows no signs of slowing down.

Opinion on him is rarely lukewarm. Said NAACP general counsel Thomas Atkins, when Sowell was rumored for a position in the Reagan cabinet, "He would play the same kind of role which historically the house niggers played for the plantation owners." Wrote columnist Carl Rowan, "Vidkun Quisling, in his collaboration with the Nazis, surely did not do as much damage to Norwegians as Sowell is doing to the most helpless of black Americans."

Sowell himself is no wallflower. Under attack from Prof. Lani Guinier, he says, "I don't need some half-white woman from Martha's Vineyard telling me about being black." And he dismisses Prof. Cornel West with, "He seems so transparently a hustler."

In his later work, starting with *A Conflict of Visions* and continuing with *The Vision of the Anointed*, Sowell has begun to take on the very tenets of liberalism. He understands the appeal of utopianism to the intelligentsia, and it alarms him: "It is not hard to understand why anyone would prefer to live in this kind of world, rather than in a world of inherently constrained options, tragic choices, and variably incremental trade-offs, rather than categorical and emotionally satisfying 'solutions.' The only question is whether it is within our power to choose between these alternative worlds—ultimately, whether reality is optional."

THE SECRET OF THOMAS SOWELL'S SUCCESS: LIKE MANY OTHERS OF HIS GENERATION, HE SEIZED WHAT OPPORTUNITIES THERE WERE.

The reality for Sowell is that he was born to a poor, lightly educated family and dropped out of high school at 17. He might easily sell himself as a bootstraps paragon—eventually, he earned a Ph.D. in economics at the University of Chicago—but he declines to use his background to enhance the credibility of his scholarly and political conclusions. His parents' appreciation of education was critical: "When I entered the seventh grade, it was a big deal. No one else in my family had ever been that far."

Sowell describes his first visit to a library. His friend Eddie was a well-bred boy from the West Indies—"The sort of boy I was always supposed to be like and was always falling short of matching"—and it was he who introduced young Sowell to the public library. "And here I am, nine years old. I have never been in a library; I have not heard of a library. I am in this room with all these books and have no idea why I'm here, because I have no money to buy books. And Eddie very patiently explains to me—several times—how a library works. And that was a turning point in my life." In that day, says Sowell, an education was obtainable by those who desired one. "It's not just nostalgia," he insists. "I have the statistics from schools in Harlem. They always used to be on the same general plane with the schools on the Lower East Side. You didn't have the situation you have now where a dozen black schools are in the bottom 1 percent."

And his own story is not unusual, he contends. He once heard from a reader—a black lawyer—who reported that out of his tenement came a doctor, another lawyer, a priest, and a college president. But today, when the situation for black young people is more dire, as Sowell notes, black leaders persist in calling for more of the same policies. Jesse Jackson and Cornel West, for example, vehemently defend affirmative action. Ellis Cose attends to the plight of the black middle class in his *Rage of a Privileged Class: Why are Middle-Class Blacks Angry? Why Should*

Neomi Rao, a former reporter for The Weekly Standard, *is a law and graduate student at the University of Chicago.*

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America Care? But Sowell can't get too exercised about middle-class rage: "Having grown up in poverty, it's very hard for me to get worked up over the problems of affluent people—no matter what color they may be."

Sowell, now 66, grew into his current intellectual stature slowly. As a young man, he never had time for "navel-gazing and hand-wringing," because he was too busy trying to earn a living. "I left home when I was 17 and discovered to my surprise that there was no enormous demand for a black high-school dropout with no skills and no experience. I also discovered that landladies wanted rent every week. They were not interested in what kind of childhood I might or might not have had." Sowell rejects the substitution of personal reflection for intellectual substance: "When I hear these young people talk about how they're trying to find themselves, I say, 'You know, when I was your age, I was trying to find the rent.' I've never had a period of my life when I had the luxury of sitting around and nursing my neuroses."

So Sowell, like many others of his generation, seized what opportunities there were. He joined the Marine Corps, then went to Howard University on the GI Bill. He transferred to Harvard, from which he was graduated *magna cum laude*. Then came Chicago, where he studied with free-market masters Milton Friedman and George Stigler. But at that point, Sowell was still a Marxist—which a stint with the Department of Labor was soon to cure. His research into the basic mechanisms of the sugar market made him skeptical of the ability of Marxism to account for human behavior. Sowell says it's easy to understand why socialism appeals to so many: "It has fewer requirements. It doesn't take much to believe in social justice."

Sowell favors looking at things as they are, while taking into account circumstance and nuance. Says Glenn Loury, who followed Sowell's lonely path as a black intellectual critical of the black establishment, "He's not just a black person who wasn't afraid to go where no one else had been able to go; Sowell has worked on creating a theoretical template for a new framework"—a framework that asks for empirical evidence instead of assumption or emotion. Sowell admits to being a conservative in the accepted sense, but believes that political discourse would be clearer if the label disappeared. "The conception of a conservative is someone who either wants to preserve the status quo or to go back to some status quo ante. And I don't want to do either."

Kent Lemon

Thomas Sowell

What pervades all of Sowell's writings is the stubborn doubt that human beings can significantly alter the order of things. In fact, he says, "There are no solutions to problems." History can "get depressing, because it makes you realize how long people have been the way they are. It doesn't lead you to hope for any great wonders in the next administration, no matter whose it is."

With Sowell—a blunt, exacting trafficker in ideas—what you see is what you get. His prickly, forceful personality is unsuited for the compromises of politics. As a true intellectual, he refuses to play the part of a cultural demagogue or an establishment operative. He writes in *A Conflict of Visions*, "Where intellectuals have played a role in history, it has not been so much by whispering words of advice into the ears of political overlords as by contributing to the vast and powerful currents of conception and misconception that sweep human action along."

Indeed, much of the ideology Sowell has fought against is now being swept back . Affirmative action, for instance, faces many legal and legislative challenges. In a *New York Times* review of *The Vision of the Anointed*, Richard Epstein asks critically whether Sowell is "seeking to slay a dragon already dead." If the anointed dragon of liberal excess is in fact dead, it is in part from the deft thrusts of Thomas Sowell's sharp sword. ♦

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~King Clinton II~

Act 2, Scene 1

Russell, Kansas. Election night. Enter Dole of Gaunt, defeated, with Kemp of York [Attendants, Consultants, Pollsters, Soccer Moms, et al.]

Dole of Gaunt. Will Clinton call, that I may breathe my last
In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?

Kemp of York. Vex not yourself, nor strive with your breath,
For all in vain comes counsel to his ear.

Dole of Gaunt. O, but they say the tongues of beaten pols
Enforce attention like deep harmony.
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain.
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain.
I had pain once. In Italy. Hurt my arm. Fine-lookin' nurses, though. Speaking of health care, I don't like bureaucracy. Bureaucracy and government. I served a long time. Don't like to brag about it. Just did. I deserved this . . .

Kemp of York. *[to Attendant Feulner]* Sirrah! Fix the TelePrompTer™ quick!

Feulner. I'm working on it.

TelePrompTer™ restored.

Dole of Gaunt. Though Clinton my life's counsel would not hear,
My loss's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

Kemp of York. No, it is stopped with other flattering sounds,
As praises, of whose taste the Dems are fond,
Lascivious meters, to whose venomous sound
The open ear of youth doth always listen.
You know, like me with Jude Wanniski.

Dole of Gaunt. He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder.
Particularly the way this guy eats. Wake up, America! The man's a slob!

Kemp of York. Feulner!

Feulner. Sorry.

TelePrompTer™ restored anew.

Dole of Gaunt. This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this Kansas,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings
—I'm talkin' me and Arlen Specter, both born right here in Russell—
Esteemed by their breed, and humble by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
I carried a lot of water for Ralph Reed and those guys, and look where it got me.

Ring of phone.

Kemp of York. The king is called; deal mildly with his youth,
For young hot colts being raged do tax the more.

Clinton II. What comfort, man? How is't with Gaunt Old Dole?

Dole of Gaunt. O how that name befits my composition!
Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old.

Clinton II. Can old men play so nicely with their names?

Dole of Gaunt. Not me. That's why I hired Mark Helprin.

Clinton II. Mark who? Do you have his card?

Dole of Gaunt. Yeah, sure. Though his stuff is best for really partisan events . . .

Exeunt omnes hurriedly, followed by Kenneth Starr.

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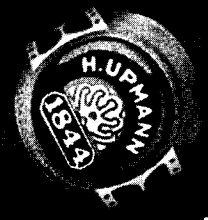

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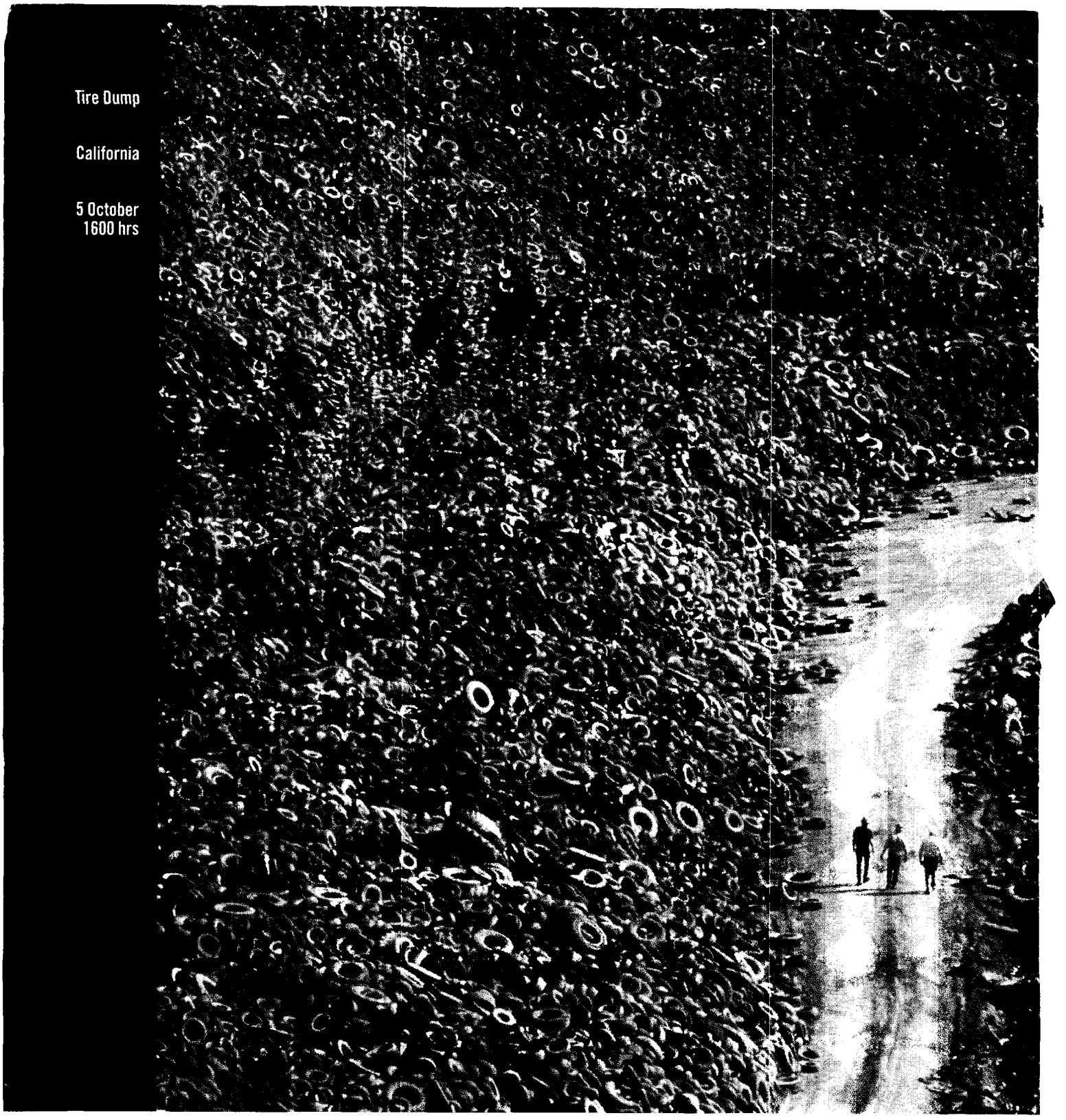

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